



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

PS 232 The Lindenwood School

27Q232

**153-23 83rd Street
Howard Beach, NY 11414**

Principal: Lisa A. Josephson

**December 18, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Joseph O'Brien**

The School Context

The Lindenwood School is a K-8 school with 1068 students from grade Kindergarten through 8. The school population comprises 10% Black, 38% Hispanic, 39% White, and 13% Asian students. The student body includes 3% 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 96.1%.

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	Celebration	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	Focus	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:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Teaching practices across classrooms consistently align to curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, as informed by the Danielson framework for teaching and the instructional shifts. Teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions into the curricula.

Impact

Teacher practice across most classrooms ensures all learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher order thinking skills in student work products. Students with disabilities, English-language learners and advanced students are provided multiple entry points, high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula, resulting in meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In six of the seven classrooms visited, lessons were aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, in 1st grade English language arts, students in one of three tiered groups listened to a nonfiction passage and used graphic organizers to either identify challenging vocabulary words, define vocabulary words using context clues from the text or identify textual evidence to support an opinion. In 6th grade social studies students worked in one of four tiered groups to either support a claim with textual evidence or write an essay. In 8th grade math, students independently solved improper fractions.
- In the majority of classrooms visited, student to student discussions and student participation in collaborative activities in flexible groups were seen. For example, students including ELLs and SWDs use discussion prompts to engage in student to student discussions. Teachers use flexible groupings of students based on classroom and state assessment data to create student groupings. Teachers also called on non-volunteers to join discussions. Questions including, “What central message would be appropriate for a story about a bully?”, “Explain what the Terracotta warriors tell us about Emperor Qin?” and “How do the narrator’s description of her mother’s footsteps relate to her feelings about her mother?” were heard.
- Students in flexible groups worked on tiered activities with unique scaffolds and resources in six of seven classes visited. For example, in 1st grade English language arts, students in one of three differentiated groups identified and defined challenging vocabulary identified author opinion and supported claims with textual evidence.
- In the majority of classrooms, teachers stepped out of their mediating, central role and facilitated learning opportunities through student discussions and engaging tasks. For example, in English language arts, students in flexible groups engaged in a debate as to the validity of a peer’s counterclaim from a non-fiction text.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers design and use assessments, rubrics and grading policies aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress towards goals across grades and subjects, track progress, and adjust curricular and instructional decisions.

Impact

School assessments provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement across grades and subjects. The school strategically makes adjustments to meet all students' learning needs, including ELLs and SWDs to ensure there is a clear portrait of student mastery. However, checks for student understanding were not seen in all classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- School practice in developing Common Core Learning Standards aligned assessments, rubrics, and grading policies are consistent and cohesive across grades and subjects. Rubrics are written in student friendly language that is easy to understand.
- Teacher-teams meet weekly to revise unit maps and assessment and to discuss gaps in instruction between grades. Teacher teams meet quarterly to look at student work to gauge the effectiveness of reading, writing and math instruction. As a result, instruction and assessments are realigned on an ongoing basis to best meet students' needs and promote student ownership of learning and growth. For example, teacher teams meet to discuss Item Skills Analysis and to identify ways to modify instruction to best meet the needs of all students. After reviewing the data, teachers identified that students were struggling with inferential questions. Teacher teams analyzed state exam questions to study the way in which questions were being asked and formulate similar questions in the classroom.
- The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals and adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers formally assess students using Fountas and Pinnell Reading Benchmarks (K-8), Core Knowledge Projects, Unit Tasks and Writing Responses (K-3), Topic Entrance and Exit slips, Guided Reading and Writing Conference notes (K-8), Common Core Learning Standards aligned English language arts and math benchmarks (Gr. 3-8), Pearson Math Unit Exams (K-5), CMP3 assessment (Gr. 6-8).
- Student self-assessment and reflections were seen in five of seven classrooms visited. For example, in 1st grade English language arts, a student reflected that "Kindness means being a nice friend."
- Teacher checks for student understanding were seen in four of seven classes.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks, and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact

The school's use of engaging and rigorous curricula for all learners, including ELLs and SWDs, results in coherent instruction, where students demonstrate their thinking across grades and subject areas while promoting college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has used Core Knowledge since 2005 and the curriculum is coherent and cohesive across subjects and grades. Skills of the week, writing genre of the month, math focus of the month, principle of learning of the month and principal's read aloud of the month are used to ensure curricular cohesion across grades and subjects. The School uses *Foundations* in K, Reading Recovery in grade 1, Pearson's Envisions math in K-5 and teacher created maps in science and social studies. *Junior Great Books* is used to supplement reading instruction in grades 4-8. CMP3 math is used in grades 6-8.
- All grade teams have created vertically aligned curriculum maps in grades K-8. Maps reflect grade level curricula, standards indicators, essential questions, related tasks and end of unit assessments. The curriculum maps list a menu of complex texts with challenging vocabulary. For example, Pre K to grade 5 maps indicate a balance of informational and literary texts and use of academic vocabulary. *Junior Great Books*, a supplemental reading program, aids teachers in the identification and use of challenging and appropriate texts in grades 4-8.
- Text-based answers figure predominantly in all curricula and tasks requiring evidentiary arguments in writing to assess textual comprehension were seen. For example, in grades 6-8, maps indicate emphasis on writing and specific writing tasks in science and social studies.
- The instructional shifts are strategically addressed in the curriculum. Each grade level in K- 8 requires a "step" of growth on the "staircase" to prepare students for the complexity of college and career ready texts. Students read the central, grade appropriate text around which instruction is centered and student entry points are created in lesson plans. Adapted tasks and scaffolds for ELLs and SWDs were seen in activities including total physical response, teacher created graphic organizers and strategies to pre teach vocabulary.
- The curriculum handbook provided to all teachers lists detailed weekly foci for all curricula. For example, reading skills of the week provide clarity for teachers and cohesion across grades and subjects. Some examples of September's foci are: facts and details, main idea, sequence, and cause and effect.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently emphasize a culture of learning that communicates high expectations to teachers, staff, families and students, provide training and have a system of accountability for those expectations. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness and successfully partner with parents to support student progress.

Impact

High expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability, collaboration, and buy-in on the part of teachers, leaders, and families, thus creating an atmosphere conducive to the developmental needs of all students. School leaders successively partner with families to support student independence, progress and ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Clear expectations for classroom environment, student portfolios and monthly principle/virtue foci are messaged in the faculty handbook. The Principal's weekly memorandum to staff underlines classroom expectations including student to student discussion and differentiation. For example, the week of December 10 notes that student groups should be listed in lesson plans and students should be engaged in differentiated work.
- The school's instructional focus is to support teachers with developing well-designed learning opportunities that require complex thinking and result in intellectual engagement. Advance data revealed that teachers struggled with Danielson components 3b, 3c, and 3d. Ongoing professional learning for teachers by teachers and school leaders in these components occur at least once per week.
- The school has designed a teacher curriculum handbook containing curriculum maps for all subjects and appendices detailing the year's tentative testing calendar, skill of the week schedule, principle of learning/phrase of the month schedule, and models of balanced literacy lesson elements for grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-8.
- Question stems from New York State English language arts exams were seen in student eye-level charts in six of seven classrooms visited. Stems including "Why does the author include... in the story?" And "Which sentences from the story best explain why...?"
- The school communicates to parents in writing on a bi monthly basis. Grade level teacher teams create a newsletter detailing what each grade will be working on in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies, important reminders and tips for families at home to support student progress.

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry based structured professional collaborations that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promotes the achievement of the school's goals and the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams systematically analyze assessment data and student work to adjust curricula and instruction.

Impact

Structured professional collaborations result in school wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Teacher teamwork results in shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers serve on teacher teams devoted to inquiry and the analyses of data that lead to adaptations and refinement to curricula and foster improvements in instructional practice. Teams meet at least twice a week to engage in inquiry, adapt curricular resources including tasks and rubrics, and engage in student data analyses.
- Teacher teams and the administration noticed in September that students were struggling in multi-step questions and word problems. After deeper analysis, teachers uncovered that students were only completing the first step in multistep problems. Teachers met to discuss strategies and made adjustments to curriculum to ensure student completion including underlining of text, visual cues and use of more complex, state exam-style questions in daily classroom activities and collaborative tasks were provided.
- The Professional Development team comprised of administration and teacher leaders meet weekly to discuss professional learning opportunities for staff. Professional learning topics include Danielson Framework for Teaching raising student engagement, use of Pinterest as a collaborative tool, guided reading, increasing student engagement and use of teacher team protocols for all teachers. Teachers are provided with class coverages and other opportunities to inter-visit formally and informally each month.
- Teacher teams of consecutive grade levels (for example, grades 2 and 3) meet to review curriculum, student data, and student work products to identify gaps in instruction. 5th grade teacher teams identified that units on explorers were repeated in both 5th and 7th grades and felt time would be better used in developing student writing and textual evidence skills. Teachers met and made adjustments to the curriculum to include more complex questions and more embedded writing tasks, cut redundancies, and expanded key units.