



Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 273

Elementary School Q273

**88-07 102nd Street
Queens
NY 11418**

Principal: Brenda Ward

**Date of review: April 1, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Mary Barton**

The School Context

P.S. 273 is an elementary school with 311 students from grade pre-Kindergarten through grade 4. The school population comprises 11% Black, 66% Hispanic, 6% White, 13% Asian students, and 3% American Indian or Alaskan Native students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. 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	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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The principal consistently communicates high expectations to staff and students and partners with families to support student progress toward achieving those expectations toward a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

The communication of high expectations with the supports to achieve them has led to a culture of mutual accountability for all members of the school community. The school's successful partnering with families enables parents to support their children's progress toward meeting expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal writes and sends both daily and weekly newsletters to faculty around current information and expectations. Included in the newsletter are tips for instructional practices based on trends viewed by the principal and coaches. Teachers stated that having these updates is very helpful. Teachers also stated that through a wide range of professional learning that takes place on "marvelous Mondays" as well as through teacher feedback on their classroom practice, they are able to improve their execution of lessons. Teachers participate in book study sessions led by the principal and teachers, using the book "Teach Like a Champion" and in differentiated professional learning based on trends in Advance and the Danielson Framework for Teaching.
- Monthly newsletters developed by grade teams are sent to parents keeping them informed of curricula topics, vocabulary words students are learning, school activities, upcoming events, and tips for parents to help children at home that include websites to access. Parent workshops are given and facilitated by teachers on the Common Core Learning Standards, reading, math, and test sophistication for third and fourth grade families around the State tests. The parent coordinator and Cornell University liaisons conduct workshops on nutrition. The school also has a CookShop program that families participate in. The principal holds student of the month meetings to discuss character development and college and career readiness. Parents stated that there is an open door policy and that parents are welcome to visit classrooms at any time, not just during open school week. Parents stated that they appreciate always feeling welcomed at school and are happy to have so many opportunities to communicate with teachers around their child's progress.
- Interim progress reports are sent home to families between the report cards cycles, which inform them of students' grades, reading levels, and behavioral information. Teachers use the Tuesday parent engagement time to meet with families around student progress, enabling parents to have more up-to-date information on children's progress.
- The principal shares the school's goals and plans for the year at the start of the year and formally gives a State of the School address in February and June to update staff and families on the progress of the school's goals.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teaching practices are aligned to curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula so that all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, are active participants engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

Impact

Across classrooms, teaching practices are meeting the needs of all learners enabling all students to produce work products reflecting higher order thinking. However, the preponderance of independent tasks limits the highest levels of student-to-student interaction in sharing thinking and ownership in work.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, lessons were aligned to the units of study. The use of academic vocabulary in English language arts (ELA) and math and an emphasis on numeric fluency in math were evident. Students were asked to use evidence from text and demonstrate their thinking in multiple ways in math tasks. However, there were limited opportunities for students to engage in deep discussion with their peers regarding content or work products. Although student groupings were evident in all classrooms, most student work time was used for independent work.
- Supports for learners were posted in most classrooms focusing on academic language with picture cues around language in the current unit of Ready Gen and Go Math. Charts about the writing process and current writing taking place in the classrooms were also in evidence with students utilizing those supports in classrooms visited. For example, in a second grade ELA classroom, while the teacher was conferring with different students, other students were working on writing stories incorporating dialogue using models as well as checklists that were provided.
- Based on Advance data, teachers have placed an emphasis on promoting student engagement and academic rigor. Small group instruction was viewed in all classrooms with students in tiered groups based on data. Students were viewed using manipulatives, graphic organizers, and specific activity cards. In a third grade ELA classroom, students were in three groups with teachers working with two of the three groups on how to use maps, photographs, and illustrations to better understand the main idea of a text. Texts on varied levels were used as well as different activities to meet students at their entry points.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school has developed rigorous curricula and tasks designed to meet the needs of all learners within and across grade levels and content areas purposefully embedding key standards and the instructional shifts.

Impact

Curricula work and task design over the past two years has built coherence to appropriately address the rigorous demands of the Common Core Learning Standards and promotes high level thinking for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional focus this school year emphasizes teachers' use of varied texts, which include scaffolds and multiple entry points to ensure access to rigorous instruction for all learners as reflected in unit and lesson plans viewed.
- Teachers collaborate on the design of the curricula in all core subject areas. Teacher teams have developed Common Core aligned curricula maps that are aligned horizontally and vertically by theme. The school adapts resources from Ready Gen and Go Math and adds other resources such as Jolly Phonics.
- Rigorous habits and higher order skills are emphasized through teachers designing questions that are aligned to Levels 3 and 4 of Webb's Depth of Knowledge. Plans include the use of textual evidence, numeracy, multi-step word problems, and adaptations for students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Viewing the gaps present in the Ready Gen literacy resource, teachers have added guided reading instruction to the literacy block and have revised writing tasks from Ready Gen to provide richer experiences in varied writing genres.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Teachers check for student understanding through a variety of means and use the information to adjust their instructional practices.

Impact

The use of assessments and student self-assessment has led to actionable next steps as teachers use data to inform instruction and grouping of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a variety of methods to check for understanding including do nows, exit slips, quizzes, problem-of-the-day in math, cold calling, and questioning throughout the implementation of lessons. For example, in a kindergarten Integrated Co-Teaching math class, students viewed a video helping them to reinforce the previous day's learning on how to count to ten. They then participated in a cold call, answering teachers' questions and working on some questions that were on the Smartboard. Teachers assessed the students' as they worked and then divided the class into three groups to work with an adult on tiered activities based on the level of students' understanding. Teachers checked for understanding again at the end of the lesson.
- The school uses a variety of common assessments to track student progress. Students are assessed on their reading levels using the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment system three times yearly at the beginning, middle, and end of school year. Progress monitoring takes place between the assessments. Teachers conference with students to review their goals around literacy, which includes discussion on improving in reading levels as well as phonics and word work. When asked, students could speak to knowing their reading levels and next steps around their goals.
- The school administers unit and benchmark assessments using the materials from the Go Math program for all students as well as the Measure of Student Performance (MOSL) performance tasks in math for students in grades 3 and 4. Data from these assessments are used to modify units of study based on trends, as well as for grouping of students.
- Students in all grades complete writing samples at the end of every Ready Gen unit, which are then assessed as an evaluation according to the unit rubric, which is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Students then receive feedback in terms of glows and grows indicating what they did well and their next steps. Teachers analyze the data and review trends making modifications to that unit and future units.

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

Teachers engage in structured professional collaborations using an inquiry approach and systematic analysis that strengthens their instructional capacity and focus on improved student learning. Embedded distributed leadership structures enable effective teacher leadership.

Impact

As a result of teachers' systematic analysis of assessment data and student work informing adjustments to lesson and unit plans, there has been an improvement in teacher practice and student progress. Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly and use a Looking at Student Work protocol in order to analyze student work, which include English language arts and Math tasks, Measure of Student Learning (MOSL) performance series, and unit and benchmark assessments.
- Vertical and grade teams across the school are engaged in the inquiry process through the review and analysis of student work products and assessments to identify gaps in the curriculum and make adjustments. For example, the school's vertical team looked at the standards running through the grades and the rubrics used in math problem solving. The team made adjustments to the rubrics to ensure that they were aligned to the standards covered in particular units of study.
- Teacher teams focus on a target population of six to nine students per grade team around a particular focus to provide targeted instructional strategies and monitoring of these students' progress toward meeting their goals. For example, the second grade team was looking at student results in a recent Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment and discussed trends observed. These trends included students having issues around the use of double consonant sounds and double consonant blends used in end sounds. Teachers worked on a lesson plan during the meeting and an exit slip to assess learning for this lesson.
- Teachers spoke to having opportunity to take on leadership roles at the school including being a part of school committees including the hiring committee, the professional development team, the MOSL team, and the Positive Behavior Intervention System team. Teachers share in the development of and presentation of professional learning to teachers. Teachers also have a voice in the selection and adaptation of curricula and assessments. The second grade teacher team spoke of having concerns around the phonics instruction in Jolly Phonics, particularly for at-risk students. In discussions with the principal, teachers now see particular students for additional phonics instruction using Jolly Phonics, having revamped some of the aspects of the program to meet student needs.