



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Jamaica Children's School

Elementary School Q312

**109-20 Union Hall Street
Queens
NY 11433**

Principal: Suzanne Wasik

**Date of review: May 8, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Seiw Kong**

The School Context

The Jamaica Children's School is an elementary school with 35 kindergarten students. The school population comprises 86% Black, 14% Hispanic, 0% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-14 is not available due to new school status.

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	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	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Through the on-going use of assessments that are aligned with the curricula, the school creates a portrait of student mastery and tracks all student progress toward the goals set across subjects areas.

Impact

Teachers use common assessment practices that provide meaningful feedback to students and adjust curricula and lesson plans so that all students gain significant progress, including higher performing students, English language learners and student with disabilities demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has an online tracking system where all teachers consistently input all reading and math data to track student progress towards goals. The system aligns the data to the standards and generates a priority standard for teachers to focus on for all students, as well as individual students. It also tracks student intervention by generating the item analysis with specific skills for teachers to provide targeted instruction through small group learning.
- In addition to the consistent daily informal assessments, teachers across classrooms assess all students periodically throughout the year for benchmark progress to track student mastery of skills and standards for all content areas. For example, Fountas and Pinnell assessment is conducted four times per year; on demand writing is conducted five times in a year and Math is assessed after each unit.
- Rubrics were used for all content areas to monitor and track all student progress. Across all classrooms, teachers use the rubrics purposefully to plan their lessons and group students accordingly for differentiation of instruction in order to target specific skills and provide meaningful feedback to students. For example, a writing rubric, used to identify next learning steps for students to work on, reflected elements of structure, development, language convention where the number points can be translated into the scaled score of 0-4.
- All grade teachers meet during common prep periods to adjust and make purposeful instructional decisions for student activities that best meet the learning styles of high performing students, student with disabilities and English language learners in order to demonstrate increased mastery towards the Common Core Learning Standards. For example, teachers discuss student misconceptions of the lesson taught by looking at the conference notes and re-strategizing for another small group instruction by breaking down the scaffolds further to ensure student understanding and mastery towards the learning target.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

All teachers articulate a set of beliefs about how student learn best and consistently engage them in high levels of thinking and participation; however, student discussion does not reflect student ownership.

Impact

Across classrooms, teachers are incorporating instructional shifts and best practices from the Danielson Framework for Teaching through effective professional learning. Student ownership in discussion and learning is evident in some classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans incorporated elements of the instructional shifts, such as vocabulary. It is the belief of the school faculty that vocabulary is one of the important elements for teaching comprehension which is aligned to their instructional focus of instilling critical thinking skills. Therefore, a vocabulary wall is evident in every classroom to support this skill. It was observed that students utilized the vocabulary wall when they walked over to remove the words for reference to support their writing pieces.
- During the lesson in the Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, students were engaged in turn and talk exercise based on prompts that required higher order thinking and participation by questioning each other's ideas and formulating connections between ideas shared. Supports for students with disabilities include question stems and the use of accountable-talk prompts that supported high levels of student thinking and participation for all learners.
- In one of the classrooms visited, although students selected their choices of live animals or objects to observe, such as a hamster, hermit crab, beta fish or cars to motivate their discussion, one of the teachers in the ICT class was directing most of the questioning and leading the students to answer the questions which limit the ownership of their discussion and learning.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty deliberately align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards with integrate the instructional shifts across subject areas; lesson plans and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous work habits that include higher order thinking skills.

Impact

As a result, all curricula are coherent across subject areas with emphasis of the school's instructional focus on students successfully demonstrating critical thinking through academic tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- To emphasize rigorous work habits, teachers create curriculum maps and lesson plans that reflect long-term learning goals, short-term learning targets, motivation, vocabulary, interactive modeling, application, grouping and exploration. They use resources from EngageNY such as, writing exemplars and reading text along with Teacher College Writing Workshop supplementary materials. Common Core math curriculum from EngageNY is one of the many resources that are referenced to align and support school's Math in Focus resource.
- School leaders and faculty ensure that the curricula are appropriately challenging by creating tasks that are interactive and connected to the real world experiences. For example, students visited the grocery store to touch, feel, smell and see different food. They bring the food back to the classroom to further investigate, thus, building vocabulary to solidify their learning and experiences.
- Across all subject areas, academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits by providing scaffolds: higher order thinking questions; pictures; question stems; i-Pads; graphic organizers for student with disabilities and English language learners to build student understanding of concept or content, thus promoting discussion that leads to higher order thinking skills. For example, kindergarten students were engaged in observing life animal where students were encouraged to discuss and make connections between the animal body features and their living environment which further transferred into writing pieces.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently convey and support a culture of high expectations for teaching and professional collaboration which focused on best practices and advancement of learning. Staff and school leaders communicate high expectations to parents that are connected to college and career readiness behaviors.

Impact

Across the school community, professional learning opportunities and ongoing feedback provide clear understanding on student progress and set high expectations for teaching and learning that ensure accountability for all school faculty, students and parents in meeting the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal provides weekly feedback to increase the quality and standard of teachers' curriculum maps and lesson plans via email prior to the delivery of the lessons. The principal ensures that the curriculum maps and lesson plans include all the pertinent elements of Danielson Framework for Teaching and Common Core standards to drive effective teaching, such as academic vocabulary, building knowledge in the disciplines, math fluency and application.
- The staff handbook communicates the school's mission and values namely, empathy, grit, inquiry, creativity and voice. These values are reinforced during the Morning Meeting and Community Meeting. They are visibly posted in classrooms and across the school building. The staff handbook also communicates high expectations for best practices for instruction, classroom environment, parent communication, and safety.
- In the weekly homework packet, families receive a detailed letter outlining the unit and lessons for the week. The packet includes a section; "Ask Me About" where it provides specific prompts from lessons children were engaged prior in order for parents to connect the school-to-home productive conversation with their children.
- Parent attendance was 100% for the fall and spring Parent-Teacher Conference which ensured that parents received feedback on student progress. In addition to these conferences, teachers consistently communicate through interim progress reports. Also, 80% of families attended a parent workshop on Common Core standards to understand and connect their children's goals that were set by the school to support college and career readiness. For example, student will effectively use at least 40 Tier II vocabulary words in their speaking and writing by end of school year.

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

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations targeting the school’s instructional focus and systematically analyzing student work and data to adjust classroom practice.

Impact

Participation and collaboration by all teachers on structured teacher teams has resulted in school wide coherence in teachers to effectively reflect on and improve their instructional practice, adjust lesson plans and design student activities to promote student mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet every Tuesday in addition to daily common preparation periods for professional collaboration to strengthen teacher instructional capacity. They use the Common Core standards chart, exemplar from EngageNY to deepen the work on their instructional focus of critical thinking to increase student achievement. For example, teacher team agendas reflected strategies for using higher order thinking questions for turn and talk to promote critical thinking skills.
- Teachers share different strategies to teach numbers 1-20 for their kindergarten students. One of the teachers reflected on her student learning style which supported her decision to select the better strategy, namely to put base ten frame to represent 10 and ones to represent any number less than 10 instead of drawing ones adding to 10 and circling them. Other teachers supported her decision and they immediately revised the shared lesson plan to reflect this suggested instructional practice to eliminate any misconceptions.
- Teachers in the Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) and general education re-grouped their students after analyzing student math work and teacher conference notes. A few students in the general education classroom were grouped with the ICT classroom students to provide the entry point necessary for them to demonstrate mastery for the targeted concept of number sense on addition. During teacher team meeting, teachers assigned students to three specific groups – counting 1-10, 10-20 and above 20. They planned for students who could identify numbers above 10 to be placed in the following week lesson of place value concept. Three students who could count to 10 were not ready for the place value concept will receive a focused instruction of identifying 10 and various numbers that makes number 10. Teachers also strategize to focus on a few students who could count up to 19 to quickly master counting to above 20. This conversation of analyzing student data and work products has resulted in improved grouping strategies and adjusting of their lesson plans, curriculum maps and pacing calendar.