



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Ryer Avenue Elementary School

Elementary School X009

**230 East 183 St.
Bronx
NY 10458**

Principal: Jacqueline Bailey

**Date of review: March 16, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Melodie Mashel**

The School Context

The Ryer Avenue Elementary School is an elementary school with 830 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 16% Black, 81% Hispanic, 1% White, 1 % Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 32% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.0%.

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	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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

Teachers meet weekly to analyze assessment data and examine student work. Leadership structures are in place providing teachers with the forum to make curricular and instructional decisions.

Impact

Teacher teams participate in regularly structured collaborations, share in making key decisions about student learning that builds teacher capacity and strengthens student learning outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Using an Atlas protocol, teacher teams meet to analyze student work. Informed by findings from the review of student writing, teachers identify instructional strategies to support student writing. For example, during an observed fourth grade teacher team meeting, teachers determined that they needed to embed differentiated questions into their lessons and during teacher led student conferences to support students in improving the quality of their written opinions.
- The analyses of student assessments and data led an observed teacher team to embed opportunities for students to engage in peer review. In addition, teachers determined the need to provide students with additional writing experiences that required students to cite and connect text evidence that supports their written opinions.
- Teacher facilitated study groups provide teachers with the venue through which they can participate in text based discussions about best practices. For example, the school's teacher teams engaged in reading *Writing about Reading* by Janet Angelillo and identified strategies to use to support students' writing development.
- The school's teacher facilitated professional development sessions provide the venue for teachers to exchange instructional best practices that support student achievement. For example, a review of the school's Professional Development Plan reveals teachers conduct workshops on a variety of topics. These teacher-led workshops provide teachers a platform to have input in school-wide instructional initiatives.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school uses Danielson's Framework for Teaching to inform and ground teacher practice in an articulated set of beliefs. Teachers employ a variety of entry points to scaffold student learning.

Impact

The school's belief that all students can learn through the use of an array of student support strategies is reflective in teacher practice resulting in student work that promotes higher order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Informed by Danielson's Framework for Teaching, systems and structures honoring the school's beliefs that every child is capable of learning and that educators need to ensure students function at their best are evident across classrooms visited.
- Teachers use a wide range of entry points to engage students in learning. In a first grade class, students were provided with differentiated math tasks and used math manipulative material to solve problems. A visit to a fourth grade class revealed students engaged in reading different leveled short text about a specific topic. However, supports that provide extensions for students at standard levels are not yet fully evident.
- Supports for English Language Learners (ELLs) and special education students ensured students participate in the same challenging tasks through the addition of entry points such as guided small group instruction. In addition, visits to classrooms reveal that ELL students were encouraged to respond to questions posed in their native language.
- Students engaged in partner talk using accountable talk stems and shared their thinking. However, evidence of deep student group discussions was evident in one class. Students in a fourth grade class used the talking rock protocol and passed the rock taking turns in discussing their thoughts about the lifestyles of two separate groups of Native Americans.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school's curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards Challenging academic tasks that emphasize higher-level thinking are embedded into the curricula.

Impact

Across grades and subjects, the school's curricular decisions build coherence and prepare students for college and career. Engaging rigorous tasks promote student thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders adopted Ready Gen as the curricula resource for English language arts. To ensure units include the instructional shifts of academic vocabulary, the units of study have been enhanced with the addition of lessons at the beginning of each unit that amplify student vocabulary. Go Math and the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) scope and sequence in social studies and science serve as the school's core aligned curricula for these subjects. Additional instructional tasks from Engage NY math modules have been infused into the school's math curriculum.
- To further align the school's curricula to Common Core Learning Standards, instructional shifts units address text complexity. A review of units in English language arts reveals students are expected to read a range of leveled text within a unit of study.
- Reading and writing units engage students in demanding tasks. For example, students in a third grade bilingual class stated that they read a variety of texts about whether animals should be kept in a zoo or not, stated a claim, and cited supporting evidence from several texts read in their opinion writing pieces.
- Lesson plans in English language arts embed Engage NY questions that emphasize higher order thinking. In addition, content area lesson plans integrate projects as a culminating component of the unit. For example, in a second grade class, students created posters and or booklets about either an urban, suburban or rural community.

Findings

The school uses common assessments and rubrics to provide students with actionable feedback, track student progress and adjust instruction and curricula.

Impact

Results from common assessments are used to monitor student progress toward standards and inform adjustments to teaching practices that promote student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a variety of assessments including Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), end of unit tests, student baselines, mid lines, end lines and teacher created tests that mirror actual state tests to monitor student progress. A review of DRA midline results suggests 90% of students have moved one level or more since the beginning of the school year.
- Teachers and students use checklists and rubrics to monitor student achievement and progress. Teachers provide students with actionable feedback in the form of glows and grows that clarify for students the next steps needed to elevate the quality of their work. For example, written teacher feedback informed a student to use the transitional words they had studied to connect ideas at the beginning of a sentence.
- Teacher teams meet to gather information from various data sources to assess student progress. The analysis of student work and assessments inform teachers of the need to provide students with the use of additional tools to scaffold learning. Teachers expressed that they infuse the use of technology such as videos on the Smart board, laptops and iPads. In addition, teachers provide students with a variety of graphic organizers that assists students in organizing their thinking prior to completing written tasks.
- A review of teacher conference notes and lesson plans reveal that information collected from formative assessments culled about student progress during the conferring process, informs teachers of needed adjustments to student groupings as well as differentiated approaches to re-teaching lesson concepts.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through a variety of venues including via Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Staff provides students with supports to guide and prepare them for the next levels.

Impact

The school leaders' communication of high expectations and the system of accountability results in instructional awareness amongst all stakeholders, thus preparing students for their next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders' classroom observations, summer and weekly professional learning sessions on topics such as research based teaching practices for English Language Learners, key strategies for providing students with effective feedback, grade level meetings, and one to one teacher conferences hold staff accountable for meeting expectations that elevate teaching practices.
- The school's teacher handbook further clarifies staff expectations. School-wide implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention Systems outlines expected student behaviors. Matrices that identify and define student expected behaviors are displayed throughout corridors and classroom.
- Ongoing feedback is provided by teachers during one to one conferences with students. Professional development sessions at the school have been devoted to elevating the quality of teacher led conferences. Review of teacher conference notes demonstrate teachers provide students with actionable targeted next steps. For example, a review of a fourth grade teacher conference notes revealed, the teacher advised the student to include a concluding sentence at the end of his written reading response.
- Teacher and student facilitated discussions inform students of the following grade's expectations. Fifth grade students read to lower grade students and share with them their fifth grade experiences. In addition, beginning in early March, fifth grade students, teachers and families visit middle schools. Guidance provides advisement to students and families and guide them through the middle school selection process.