



Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Philip Sheridan School

Elementary School X021

**715 East 225th Street
Bronx
NY 10466**

Principal: Joyce Coleman

**Date of review: January 14, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Cheryl McClendon**

The School Context

The Philip Sheridan School is an elementary school with 696 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 71% Black, 25% Hispanic, 01% White, and 02% Asian students. The student body includes 06% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. 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	Developing
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	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to the staff and provide training and accountability structures. The faculty communicates expectations and provides feedback to families regarding student progress.

Impact

The communication of high expectations to teachers and families with accompanying supports enhances opportunities for student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders surveyed teachers to gauge their professional development needs. The responses were graphed and analyzed to inform the development of the professional development schedule for the year. Professional development agendas and attendance sheets reflect the various workshops that have been facilitated by school leaders. Topics include: looking at student work, effective practices for teacher teams, higher order thinking skills and accountable talk, Ready Gen training, Go Math training, writing strategies and HIV curriculum implementation.
- School leaders provide professional literature that teachers are expected to read in preparation for discussions during professional learning sessions. Examples of school wide professional learning articles that have been distributed are “Looking at Student Work for Teacher Learning”, “Teacher Community and School Reform”, and “Writing Fluency: A Key to Success on Next Generation Assignments”.
- Each grade communicates with families regularly through monthly newsletters. These newsletters feature important dates, classroom news, reminders of teacher availability for weekly meetings, students of the month, homework expectations and focal curriculum highlights. During the parent meeting, parents stated they look forward to receiving these newsletters every month and some shared that the availability of teachers for weekly meetings helps to keep them informed of their child’s progress.
- The school provides Saturday Academy to prepare students for success on the end of year standardized tests. In addition, a home license to the on-line independent reading site has been extended to all P.S 21 families. Parents state that their children read independently through Myon after completing their homework, every evening.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, instructional practices do not regularly incorporate effective questioning strategies and appropriate scaffolds consistently to provide multiple entry points.

Impact

Inconsistent use of effective questioning, appropriate instructional scaffolds and modalities limits student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In some classes, teachers asked probing questions to push student thinking. For example in a fourth grade integrated co-teaching class the teacher consistently asked students, “How do you know your answer is correct?” and required each student group to prove their mathematics problem solution by using the inverse operation. In another class the teacher was observed asking clarifying questions to guide the work of students engaged in categorizing animals and their habitats. These practices, however, were not common across classrooms. Low –level questioning in some classes resulted in limited single-word responses.
- Appropriate instructional scaffolds such as illustrations, graphic organizers, number bonds and tens frames were used by some teachers. However, the limited use of available and appropriate instructional tools diminished the accuracy and effectiveness of the lesson in one classroom and conversely, too much “modeling” decreased opportunities for student engagement in problem-solving in another classroom.
- Effective use of the “turn and talk” strategy for sharing ideas was observed in some classrooms. However, in many classrooms teacher-centered direct instruction was prevalent and verbal interactions were mostly teacher to student and student to teacher.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school is in the process of aligning curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards. Presently higher-order skills and rigorous habits are inconsistently reflected in academic tasks.

Impact

Although Ready Gen and Go Math are Common Core-aligned, the absence of a school-wide focus on curriculum mapping leads to an inconsistency in the skill level and rigor of academic tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- ReadyGen is used for English Language Arts instruction across the grades. School leaders shared that this curriculum presents a significant challenge in that the complexity level of the class texts in each unit on each grade exceeds the reading level of most of the students on the grade. This necessitates teachers reading texts aloud and chunking texts for skill-focused lessons thereby limiting the opportunities for independent reading which is a requirement of the Common Core Learning Standards.
- School leaders shared that the social studies cluster teacher is aligning the social studies curriculum to the social studies scope and sequence. In addition, Ready Gen units integrate social studies and science topics. School leaders maintain that this also supports content area instruction.
- Commercial instructional planning supports such as Ready Gen unit outlines and the Go Math curriculum map are available for teachers to use in planning. Using these tools, teachers customize lesson plans for their classes.
- Although teachers have been provided with professional development focusing on developing higher-order questioning and tasks to promote high level critical thinking there is an inconsistency in the cognitive demand of classwork and homework tasks, across the grades.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school administers common assessments and they are developing in the use of the data. Across classrooms, the inconsistent use of checks for understanding during instructional periods limits teachers' abilities to make effective instructional modifications.

Impact

The developing use of common assessments supports teachers in identifying and developing programs for student support. Insufficient checks for understanding limits information to guide necessary instructional and curricular refinements.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders report that teachers administer Fountas and Pinnell running records every ten weeks. The school charts the data. Acknowledging that ReadyGen does not have a Guided reading component, the school is developing guided reading instruction across the grades as a tier I intervention strategy to support the 63% of the student population who are reading below standard level.
- Based on running records data, at-risk students are identified for the "Award" on-line reading program. Within this tier II pull out intervention program, student progress is measured by embedded curriculum-based measures. Systematized articulation structures between the pull-out teacher and classroom teachers to maximize the strategic use of the data are not yet evident.
- Go Math baseline item skills analysis data has been collated by grade, illuminating the percentage of proficiency within each mathematics strand for each grade. In response to data analysis, teachers state that they now realize that in June they have to introduce the September – Unit 1 concepts in order to give students more time and access to the curriculum.
- Across classrooms visited there was a disparity in teachers' use of checks for understanding. While in a fourth grade integrated co-teaching classroom students used white boards to prominently display their mathematics problem-solving as the teachers circulated to monitor for procedural accuracy and possible errors; in other classrooms teachers overlooked errors and confusions reflected in student work

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

An inquiry approach wherein teachers analyze data and student work is in the developing stages. Presently, this work does not typically result in improved pedagogy or progress towards goals for groups of students.

Impact

Lack of a focused inquiry approach minimizes the impact of teacher team meetings on teacher pedagogy and student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- Although professional development has been provided to the staff, highlighting effective practices for teacher teams (as reflected by professional development agendas and attendance sheets) the observed teacher team meeting was unfocused. A coach had a couple of samples of student work on the table; however they were not shared amongst the group for strategic analysis. Teachers engaged in a roving discussion about paragraph structure, spacing, graphic organizers and comparing and contrasting.
- During the teacher team ‘question and answer’ session a teacher shared that the fourth grade teacher team is “looking at how vocabulary deficits impact getting evidence from the text”. She shared that analysis of the performance-based assessment illuminated this issue and that further formative assessments are needed to support development in these areas.
- A teacher team participant presented exemplars of introductions and conclusions that she collected from the internet. Teachers briefly discussed the possibility of using them as scaffolds.