



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Basheer Quisim School

Elementary School X053

**360 East 168th Street
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Dr. Collin Wolfe

**Date of review: March 26, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Claudy Makelele**

The School Context

The Basheer Qusim School is an elementary school with 1320 students from grade PreK through grade 5. The school population comprises 35% Black, 63% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 28% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.2%.

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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards.

Impact

Teacher teamwork has allowed for collaboration in planning and looking at student work resulting in improved teacher practice. Structures that support the school's high expectations contribute to mutual accountability for staff and families, providing students with a clear plan for educational success.

Supporting Evidence

- As a natural progression from the Inquiry Teams from before, teachers are now meeting in horizontally created "teacher teams." The teacher teams are scheduled strategically to allow for them to meet for ninety minutes weekly to develop lesson plans, reflect on data and talk about best practices. Each teacher team has a "grade convener" who serves as the team leader and as a liaison between administration and the team.
- Vertical networks have resulted from the teacher teams, making it easier for the teacher on different grades to map the trajectory of learning and the developmental layers of knowledge that is compounded by grade.
- Agendas show evidence of professional development with differentiated topics for each grade level teacher team. The teams have agendas that are focused on specific topics and arranged by grade facilitator and items, for example, Student Work Analysis, Data Analysis, and Protocols for Discussions.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use daily assessments. Actionable feedback is provided to students for students to make progress towards educational goals.

Impact

The school uses a variety of assessments to determine student progress and adjust curriculum as needed based on constructive feedback. Teacher collaboration on data analysis results in modifications to curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Assessments are given regularly and the scores are tracked by student, by class and by grade. Students are given both norm-referenced assessments and criterion-referenced assessments. The school has an Internal Assessment Calendar that is closely followed for tracking and monitoring progress.
- The school uses pre- and post- unit assessments to make adjustments to instruction as necessary. The data constantly informs the pedagogy and allows for ongoing checks for understanding in a proactive manner. With the constructive feedback from the assessments teachers are better equipped to tailor instruction as necessary.
- Rubrics and checklists are created with task assignments to provide clear expectations to both teachers and students for an assignment. Students are provided written comments on their work detailing next steps and areas of focus. For example, the comments from each literacy unit are kept on a header sheet in each student's folder with a rubric grade and next steps for the students to focus on in the next writing piece.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teacher teams and staff consistently communicate high expectations through ongoing and detailed feedback to teachers and students, to further their understanding of student progress and set clear expectations for learning.

Impact

The school celebrates academic achievement and has supportive structures in place resulting in a culture of mutual accountability for student progress and improved teacher practices. The Principal has ensured that all stakeholders are aware of the mission of the school and are actively engaging in helping students to meet educational goals by focusing on quality instruction and planning.

Supporting Evidence

- The mantra of the school is that all students will read, write, and compute mathematically on or above grade level by the end of the current school year, (2014-15). To this end, students are celebrated during two Honors Assemblies and the school has been inducted in the National Honor Society for Elementary Schools. The teachers ensure that students reach interim benchmarks to advance student learning and achievement. Teachers and families work collaboratively to ensure that students meet or exceed academic proficiency in the content areas by participating in tutorials, mentorships, community service, afterschool programs, enrichments, Saturday Academies, and offerings during both the winter and spring recess sessions. All of these academic offerings support college and career readiness at the primary school level.
- Partnerships with Boy Scouts of America, City Harvest, the Wellness in Schools program and having a Student Council have all helped to foster leadership and healthy lifestyles amongst the students.
- Additionally, a Climate Committee was established to enhance the culture and climate of the school. This committee has engaged staff in various social activities which have seemingly impacted this domain in a positive manner.
- High expectations are expressed and established consistently via communication to parents, staff members and expressly to the student body. The Principal sends written communication including Memos, report cards and interim reports to the parents to keep them abreast of their student's progress. When necessary, parent conferences are held to discuss students' progress.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teacher teams have co-constructed curriculum integrating Common Core Learning Standards, instructional shifts and essential questions to build coherence and emphasize rigorous thought.

Impact

Rigorous habits are developed through the units and tasks that require higher level thinking are embedded in the learning foci and targets of each week. The school's curricular decisions build coherence across grades and for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs).

Supporting Evidence

- Instructional units have been written, unpacking the standards and highlighting the instructional foci and learning targets for each unit, by week. On every grade, explicit instructional questions have been formulated for each unit's objective and have been embedded into the lesson plans.
- The staff has been offered a variety of in-service professional development programs aligned to curriculum such as ReadyGen and Foundational Skills that help students with strategies. Such as gathering evidence and answering short and extended responses, which were observed across all content-areas. This aimed at educating the staff on the implications of teaching to fully impart all of the necessary Common Core Learning Standards. Examples of professional development include a math consultant from Generation Ready, who worked with the teachers on small grouping activities in mathematics.
- Across all grades and content areas, tasks are written with group breakouts in mind, to specifically address the targeted group's needs. Progress monitoring groups are written into lesson plans with differentiated activities for those groups of students. These task cards are developed within Teacher Teams, and reflect different learning opportunities and purposeful selection of key Common Core Learning Standards, and emphasis of instructional shifts that promote academic rigor, with a focus on ELLs and SWDs.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Pedagogy reflects an articulated set of beliefs of how students learn best using a variety of higher-order thinking tasks, multiple points of entry and direct instruction.

Impact

Staff members reflect on student progress and plan to meet the needs of all students in engaging learning activities that promote higher order thinking and yield student outcomes which demonstrate rigor and cognitive demands as evidence in the lesson planning and lessons that include scaffolds and strategies which support individual learners, and are aligned to the instructional outcomes, appropriate activities and tasks, as aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Supporting Evidence

- The instructional framework of the school is characterized by 15-20 minutes of direct instruction, a phase of 20 – 30 minutes of differentiated learning followed by 45 minutes of tasks and activities ending with a summary. Given that the instructional focus of the school is content-driven and evidence-based learning, all grades are allocated 90 minutes for teacher team planning with an additional preparation period time aligned by grade to allow for multiple opportunities to collaboratively plan.
- Teachers utilize rubrics and checklists to evaluate samples of student work and determine the quality with normed criteria. Group inter-visitations are formally scheduled for the purposes of observing and learning from peers.
- Teachers meet with the administration and consultants to discuss their progress, goals midyear, and to students’ academic performance. Additionally, observational feedback provides suggestions for improvement to teachers. Professional development, topics, such as Advance Overview, ReadyGen Nuts and Bolts, Initial Planning Conferences, Measures of Student Learning, Learning Targets, and Review of Learning Walk established for the year to provide ongoing instructional support to the teachers.
- ELLs are supported through ESL scaffolds, strategies and methodologies, and parents are supported by the direct instructional opportunity to partake in English as a second language class, three time days a week, from 9am -11am. One example was a session of the parent class as they reviewed for a vocabulary quiz. The classroom was print rich and included process and reference charts. By looping parents into the instructional core, the parents strategically support student learning.