



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Kings College School

Elementary School X094

**3520 Kings College Place
Bronx
NY 10467**

Principal: Diane Da Procida

**Date of review: May 14, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Matthew Angell**

The School Context

Kings College School is an elementary school with 1,240 students from grade Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 18% Black, 68% Hispanic, 3% White, and 11% Asian students. The student body includes 28% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.5%.

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	Celebration	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	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	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	Focus	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, content standards, and the instructional shifts.

Impact

The school's coherent curricula engage all students in consistently rigorous academic tasks that require them to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills and prepare them to be college and career ready.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has adopted the ReadyGen curriculum in English language arts and the Go Math! curriculum while adding resources from other sources, such as EngageNY, to match the expected rigor of Common Core Learning Standards. Mathematics has been revised to deepen student understanding of mathematical processes and require students to write deeper explanation of their strategies. English language arts units include more opportunities for students to read authentic leveled texts and respond in writing. Science and social studies, while retaining their alignment to the scope and sequence, have been integrated into the English language arts units to provide more opportunities for students to read non-fiction texts.
- The school curricula consistently emphasize rigorous habits in their academic tasks in order to keep students on a path towards college and career ready. A 3rd grade persuasive writing unit integrates science and social studies texts and requires students to cite text evidence in support of their claim related to environmental issues connected with freshwater around the world. Throughout the unit students take multiple formative on-demand assessments connected to Common Core Learning Standards. Expectations for the task are clearly presented in the task rubric students' use throughout the unit.
- Instructional coaches, with experience in strategies for English language learners and students with disabilities, work with teachers to ensure the curricula contain strategies for all learners. For instance, a 1st grade unit and pacing calendar in mathematics includes modifications for lessons assessments, manipulatives for each concept, and scaffolding strategies to engage students in the material.

Area of Focus

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations. Teacher teams analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

Use of the inquiry approach to professional collaboration is developing across teams. Teamwork does not yet result in consistent improvement in teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct a school inquiry team that reviews common assessment data and shares findings with coaches and grade team leaders; however, this practice does not yet extend to teacher teams. Current team protocols are isolated to single meetings with very short action plans and no assessment assigned to measure effectiveness.
- As part of the school's Astor Grant teachers in lower grades have had training and support in analyzing student progress in reading and writing. Teacher teams review running record assessment data and curricula assessments to identify student's strengths and next steps. They then look at that data over time to see the effectiveness of guided reading strategies. The same proficiencies have not been extended to all teacher teams.
- A first grade team was observed listening to a colleague set up the unit and task for the group, reviewing some sample student work, and sharing suggestions for future instruction. The team was a large group, 12 teachers and 1 coach, and they stated that their normal protocols required one teacher to present at each meeting. The presenting teacher has full choice over topic and student work presented. There is no guiding goal or connected thread between meetings. This structure limits teacher ability to measure progress over time and connect their work to school goals.
- Many teachers have created structures, on their grade, to share best practices and draw on each other's content expertise in writing and revising lesson plans. Teachers spoke to one advantage of having large grade teams in that they can work in smaller groups to plan lessons for each content area and draw on each other's strengths. Teachers stated that that has helped improve their content knowledge in areas they had felt less proficient in.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms teaching strategies inconsistently provided multiple entry points into the curricula and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking.

Impact

Not all students were engaged in appropriately challenging tasks leading to uneven demonstration of higher order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers utilized a variety of strategies to engage learners in learning through multiple entry points; however, many strategies resulted in uneven participation or commitment. For instance, during a kindergarten class students worked in centers or with a teacher on guided reading. The center work for students was inconsistent in providing rigorous tasks for students to complete while often providing limited guidance on what objective students were working towards or how they would be successful. On the other hand, focused guided reading groups with clear objectives and well-structured supports to enhance the lesson were provided by the teachers.
- One of the school's foci for the year is on improving student discussions within the classroom, and, while there were definitive strategies teachers used to generate discussion, the dialogues were not always connected to the objective or structured to engage all students. For instance, during a 1st grade read aloud the teacher offered multiple opportunities for students to turn and talk with a partner after asking a question, but there was often no follow-up or share out from students. Few questions were planned in advance as well which led to many discussions moving away from the lesson objective. Similar outcomes were observed in many classrooms where the discussions did not generate deeper understanding because of a lack of connection to the objective.
- Academic tasks implemented during instruction were uneven in their rigor and expectations across classrooms. In a 2nd grade classroom student groups were engaged in scaffolded problem solving through a packet on polygons. Students rotated through stations that provided different sets of manipulatives to solve different problems as well as a teacher led station where the teacher extended student thinking and assessed learning. In contrast a 3rd grade math lesson, in a class of students with disabilities, participated in a simple read aloud and used rubber bands to make simple shapes.
- During a 4rd grade math lesson students shared out their problem-solving strategies for identifying remainders when dividing. All groups outlined their strategies and their thinking on chart paper. Students were able to articulate their reasoning during group share out. However, the problem sets given to each group were of low level, only requiring students to apply a division strategy and identify the remainder. Additionally, the group share out became repetitive with so many similar problems so that students were not able to appropriately demonstrate higher order thinking.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

Across classrooms teachers used rubric-based assessments aligned to the curricula and consistently checked for student understanding.

Impact

Students and teachers consistently received actionable feedback regarding student achievement. Checks for understanding and student self-assessment during classroom instruction allowed teachers to make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- All units of study, across grades and subjects, contain an end of unit assessment and performance task. A review of portfolios and posted work revealed that teachers consistently give actionable feedback to students regarding their achievement. Portfolios contained cover sheets that tracked student performance over time. Students stated that they used rubrics and checklists throughout their units of study and receive feedback. Students were able to describe what they were working on based on their teacher's feedback.
- Across classrooms students were observed using rubrics and checklists to guide their work in class. Many teachers provided clear expectations at the beginning of the class period that were carried through in the form of checklists or rubrics that students used throughout the lesson as a reference. For instance, in a 3rd grade math lesson while students collaborated in their groups to create their presentation of their problem solving strategies they referenced what their presentations needed and discussed whether or not they included all parts in their chart paper.
- Teachers consistently carried clipboards while circulating the classroom taking conferencing notes, capturing student responses, and making adjustments to instruction. For instance, during a 3rd grade English language arts lesson students were collaborating on a response to their reading and the teacher circulated among the groups asking probing questions and recording responses. She paused the lesson multiple times to address common misconceptions she observed and corrected student thinking. Additionally, there was evidence within her planning that the groups were flexible based on skill level from assessment data.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide connect professional development. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

Systems for accountability ensure staff members are supported in meeting expectations. Ongoing feedback to families helps them understand student progress towards expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School faculty has set clear communication standards between home and school through the implementation of a positive behavior intervention system they have named STARS (safety, teamwork, always responsible, respect, and self-control). They have created documents for students, teachers, and parents that outline expectations for behavior as well as academics throughout the school year. All members of the school community agree to uphold the expectations.
- The school has created and implements many structures to engage families and keep them connected to their children’s learning. Families have the ability to meet with their child’s teacher on Tuesday afternoons and at family teacher conferences, but families stated that they communicate with their child’s teacher frequently through email, text, and phone calls. Families stated that progress reports and the school website keep them informed about what is happening at the school and about their child’s academic progress. Parent workshops are held throughout the year to inform and communicate to parents important strategies being implemented such as recent workshops on “How to help your child grow as a writer.”
- School leaders have created a flexible, adaptable professional development plan that responds to teacher needs and provides differentiated support. The structure of the plan was clearly communicated to teachers from the beginning of the year including time frames teachers would meet and the expectations of session outcomes in classroom practice. Teachers are broken up into four groups during each cycle and lead facilitators are chosen from administrators, coaches, and teachers. Specifically, a big push for the school this year, after receiving an Astor Literacy Grant through partnership with Network affiliation Teaching Matters, has been on improving guided literacy. School leaders could show a clear connection between professional development and teacher improvement through regular cycles of observation. Additionally, classroom strategies were observed during classroom visits.