



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 195

Elementary X195

**1250 Ward Avenue
Bronx
NY 10472**

Principal: Andrew Kavanagh

**Date of review: March 4, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Rafaela Espinal**

The School Context

PS 195 is a/an elementary school with 980 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 18% Black, 78% Hispanic, 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.5%.

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	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	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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	Developing
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	Developing

Area of Celebration

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

School leadership is developing opportunities for teachers to be engaged in structured, professional collaborations to develop curriculum, analyze student work and plan instruction.

Impact

The work of teacher teams is beginning to result in improved pedagogy and student progress on school based assessments.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet on a weekly basis to look at student work samples utilizing different protocols. During an observed teacher team meeting, participants were utilizing the Tuning protocol to look at student work. For example, while observing, the team teachers were able to look at a student work sample and decide what areas the teacher that shared the work would be focusing on, based on their findings.
- The grade teams meet bi-weekly to collaborate and discuss the curriculum and instruction to provide support to one another to enrich and modify their lessons. The Instructional Coaches meet the grade level teacher teams weekly. The other two weeks, teachers engage in peer observation around the school's focus on questioning and discussion techniques.
- Teacher leaders and coaches meet with the administrative team weekly to discuss school-wide patterns and trends as well as set areas of focus for each grade based on trends found when analyzing student work samples or common assessment data. Grade leaders represent their grades during weekly meetings to discuss their thoughts and concerns that ensure the effectiveness of teacher teams.
- Professional development workshops are provided by classroom teachers who facilitate/turnkey their specialties and new learning. These teachers are responsible to turnkey the information to other teachers during teacher team meetings and/or by facilitating a professional development session. Instructional coaches and the data specialist meet, join the weekly meetings to collaborate and ensure cohesiveness.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The school's faculty has started to use common assessments across subject areas to determine student progress. Teachers use assessment, rubrics and grading policies, but the feedback to students is limited. Across classrooms assessment practices reflect the inconsistent use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

Uneven levels of adjustments in curricula and instruction during instructional time limits meeting all students learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- During one of the teacher team meetings, teachers analyzed student work and identified target areas of growth for three groups of students that would be addressed during a unit of study. For example, teachers noticed that the students needed more work on writing mechanics, punctuation, and expanding their thinking. However, trends across classrooms could not be discussed or the elements in the rubric were not referred to specifically.
- Teachers are starting to utilize a variety of assessments to monitor student progress in English language arts (ELA) and math, but not all content areas. The data is kept in common dropboxes and is monitored by the data specialist. Teachers enter data from Go-Math units assessments, Treasures, and Fountas and Pinnell reading levels. In addition, teachers utilize running records, conferencing notes, exit slips, and mid/end unit assessment data to modify units to support student needs. This was evident in some of the lesson plans, as well as the unit plans for ELA and mathematics.
- Limited feedback practices were evident in the schoolwide rubric used to grade student writing. There were inconsistencies in the feedback to students and the tasks they were asked to complete. For example, in writing non-fiction text, the feedback to multiple students centered on voice thus the feedback is loosely aligned to the task. The focus on the student work was on the numerical grade and not on feedback that would advance student learning.
- The school uses the common assessments referenced above to measure student progress; however, they are not measured for progress towards individual student goals and across all subject areas. The adjustments based on these results were not consistently evident across curricula and instruction.
- Although school leaders shared that there is a schoolwide expectation that teachers monitor for understanding throughout and that teachers use checklists, parking lots, informal checks for understanding, and peer to peer questioning, these were not observed in practice at the classroom levels. During lessons, teachers did not provide specific feedback or make adjustments during the lessons. Only two out of seven classrooms observed had checklists with the students' names, but comments included, "Volunteered to read fluently." "Knew ants helped the queen." Therefore, this was not specifically tracking for understanding towards the lesson objective and loosely aligned to the curricula.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to Common Core Learning Standards. Academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits inconsistently across grades, subjects for all students including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWD).

Impact

Although, school leaders and faculty are starting to make purposeful decisions to ensure that curricula are Common Core aligned, current curricula and academic tasks are hindering all learners from enhancing their higher-order skills.

Supporting Evidence

- The vertical curriculum mapping team worked with respective grade bands to align curriculum with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). For literacy, the school designed their own curriculum by using a combination of approaches and programs. These include the CAFÉ (Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency, Expanded Vocabulary) Daily 5, Treasures, Fountas and Pinnell, and 6+1 trait writing approach. However, the incorporation of the instructional shifts is not clearly delineated.
- The school is taking steps to align the curricula to content standards. The school has started to integrate science and social studies with the reading and writing blocks and have aligned them with the CCLS. The math curriculum was chosen from New York City's core curriculum that they believe promotes higher order thinking, as well as supports diverse learners such as ELLs and SWDs. However, the supports and differentiated tasks did not consistently engage a diversity of learners and the curriculum maps do not show how the units will be differentiated at the group and individual student level. A kindergarten social studies unit included skills, essential questions, and listed the standards, but there was no differentiation for ELLs and for SWDs.
- Teachers collaborate from various grades to create curriculum calendars. Teachers were executing the curriculum materials and lesson plans gathered. However, the units reviewed do not yet include tasks that include scaffolds that support students' individualized needs as evidenced by sample curricula maps for Treasures Grade 2 Unit 3, Treasures Unit 3 Reading, Treasures Unit 4 Writing, and Kindergarten Units 1&2 for social studies. At the classroom level, the practice is still emerging; since, differentiated lesson plans were present in only one of the first four classrooms observed. The teacher created an addendum to the plan and named the students and the scaffolds for the ELLs. In the plans from the classes visited in the afternoon, only one first grade lesson plan listed students in groups for the student work period and had two different paper choices in the Venn diagram graphic organizer to provide students access to the curricula. However, it was not clear how the groups were formed and if data was used.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Instructional practices across classrooms are beginning to be informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, but do not consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula with challenging tasks to engage all learners. Furthermore, high-level student work products and discussions were not evident across most classrooms.

Impact

Although classes consisted of a diverse student body across classrooms, academic tasks were not scaffolded to engage all learners and, therefore, not all students' work products and discussions reflected high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In an ELA bilingual class, the teacher scaffolded the content to provide all learners with an entry point to discuss and analyze the different content as they discussed ants. However, the text was a whole class text, which hindered students' ability to read independently at their levels. Additionally, in classes where there were SWDs and ELLs, students were not provided with scaffolds or tasks that provided them with an entry point that they could manage given their diverse needs. All students, except for two classes, completed the same task and/or assignment.
- In other ELA classes, students were grouped. However, all students were expected to complete the same task without scaffolds embedded in the work. Hence, there were opportunities for more differentiated and challenging tasks for some students within those groups. For example, students that were engaged in 'read to self' and 'read to other' activities could have more choices in the responses to literature. The students completed half-page graphic organizers with very scaffolded sentence starters even though they were reading grade appropriate books and could have been cognitively engaged in more choices of meaningful tasks. There were limited opportunities for students to explain their thinking to their teachers and peers in writing or in discussions.
- Teachers are also starting to utilize rubrics, checklists, post-its with feedback, one-on-one conferences with notes, and exit tickets to monitor student progress and check for understanding during lessons. A review of teachers' conference notes indicated that in some cases, formative assessment leads to instructional adjustments. Adjustments observed included guided reading group instruction, leveled text, and uses of a variety of graphic organizers. However, across classrooms most feedback on rubrics was not student specific. Students were not provided with actionable feedback so that they are aware of what they know and what they need to learn. For example, for a student in first grade the feedback on the rubric was "Good work. Next step: Stay focused on your work." Next step: Answer all the questions." In a third grade class students received 3's for one paragraph, on an expository rubric that listed element such as Focus, Organization, Ideas, and Word Choice, but did not explain the criteria. The feedback was very weak. For another group of ELLs, the feedback on a non-fiction text stated next time, "add voice."
- The school shared that their instructional focus is questioning and discussion using embedded academic language. Across classrooms, students were not actively engaged in discussions that allowed them to approach content at the academic level based on specific needs. Questions heard had the right instructional focus, but did not promote discussion.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders and staff are developing feedback systems to communicate expectations to both families and students. Teacher teams establish a culture for learning and are developing feedback and guidance supports needed to help prepare students for the next level.

Impact

Feedback to families and students lack detail and clarity needed to help students prepare for the next level and clear expectations for/towards progress to achieve expectations for college and career readiness are not fully developed.

Supporting Evidence

- Most staff members have prior exposure and professional development on understanding and implementation of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school is using the framework to improve instruction and maintain high expectations for teaching and learning. Administrators believe that the rubric provides clear criteria for each component of the framework and they reviewed it with each teacher during the initial planning conferences at the beginning of the year teacher meetings. Administrators provide teachers with timely feedback, but the next steps including strengths, focus areas, strategies to implement, resources for professional growth, and inter-visitation recommendations need to be more specific and actionable.
- In efforts to establish partnerships with families through monthly grade newsletters, various parent workshops and family activities are planned. These opportunities provide parents with the strategies and tools on how to continue supporting their child academically at home. However, parents shared that they were not aware of these opportunities and that they would like training on understanding the Common Core Learning Standards Particularly, in understanding the math standards and the new approaches to math instruction.
- School leaders and teachers shared that feedback to students and parents regarding college and career readiness is provided in report cards, progress reports, AIS progress reports, and parent and student meetings. Parents shared that they get numbers on the reports (a review of the report also confirmed that it is a numerical grade of 1-4) and that they would prefer more explicit written feedback on how to help move their child to the next level.