



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 196

Elementary School X196

**1250 Ward Avenue
Bronx
NY 10472**

Principal: Lizzette Graciani

**Date of review: March 23, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Maria Giacone**

The School Context

P.S. 196 is an elementary school with 934 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 18% Black, 77% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian and 3% other students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 17% 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 93.0%.

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	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	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and curricula and higher order skills are consistently emphasized for all learners across grades and content areas.

Impact

Curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula are purposely designed to promote coherence by ensuring vertical alignment of instruction. For example, in math, multiplication is introduced at the end of 2nd grade to proceed into 3rd grade. In literacy, units in 4th and 5th grades build on response to literature.
- A review of curricular documents reveals modifications and amplifications to the Ready Gen and Go Math curricula to respond to students' needs. In literacy, revisions include the redesign of the pre-kindergarten curriculum to include both fiction and non-fiction texts, compare and contrast activities with both fiction and non-fiction texts in kindergarten, an emphasis on informational writing in third grade, and fifth grade added author study to enhance response to literature skills. In math, revisions include a unit on graphing and data following multiplication in the third grade, and converting fractions from mixed numbers to improper fractions in fourth grade.
- A review of lesson plans reveals scaffolding for English language learners (ELLs) and students who are struggling. For example, in a 3rd grade plan for a lesson on cause and effect, ELLs are afforded explanations of specific vocabulary regarding references that describe the names of regional winds. In a 4th grade class small group work for ELLs and struggling students includes modeling a Think Aloud during small group instruction.
- Lesson plans are designed to promote rigorous habits and higher order thinking through a progression of Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DoK) leveled questions to foster thinking and discussion. For example, in a 2nd grade lesson plan on researching a famous American, a question reads, "Why would the author include this section? Why is this section important to a reader?" In a 5th grade math class, students are asked to convince their classmates that their answer is correct.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across the school, teaching strategies allow all students to engage in challenging tasks, yet active participation by all students varies across classrooms.

Impact

Practices across classrooms support students to produce meaningful work products, yet there are missed opportunities for all learners to participate actively and take ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms visited, teaching strategies included multiple entry points to allow all students to access the curriculum including small group instruction, conferencing, turn and talk, visuals, manipulatives and checklists for self-monitoring. For example, in a 3rd grade class, students shaded fraction strips on the Smartboard. In a 4th grade class, multiple groups of students worked on writing to respond to inference questions, each with different supports including graphic organizers for pre-writing, checklists to monitor their work and small group and individualized work with the teacher.
- In most classes visited, students engaged in discussion and participation. In a 2nd grade class students in groups argued over placing coins in order of value and then counted their total value. After reading a selection on Mars, students in a 5th grade class discussed why the presence or absence of water was significant and compared findings on Mars with what they knew about Earth.
- Student work products showed evidence of higher order thinking. For example, in a 1st grade class students wrote and drew in answer to a prompt where they were asked to compare themselves to a character in their text. In a 5th grade class, students were asked to think about and discuss details from a text they had read that caused tension, set the mood and showed how the character felt. Then students were asked to revisit the leads they had written for their science fiction piece with a view towards creating mood. However, across classrooms, there were missed opportunities to allow all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities to question their peers, and guide or critique their fellow students so as to extend and increase engagement, participation, and ownership of their learning.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments to provide feedback to students. Teachers regularly check for understanding and use the information to make adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

Impact

The monitoring of student progress and the regular use of checks for understanding allows teachers to determine student progress towards goals and adjust instructional practices accordingly.

Supporting Evidence

- Analysis of data gleaned from the administration of common assessments leads to adjustment of instructional practices. For example, a 2nd grade unit assessment revealed that students were struggling to solve word problems. Teachers collaboratively designed lessons to incorporate word problems into math lessons on a daily basis. Post assessments showed significant gains. Based on analysis of student work and data, 4th grade teachers determined that students faced challenges in integrating information from two texts. Teachers then introduced paired passages and practice essays with a planning page for writing.
- Across classrooms visited, there was a consistent practice of checking for understanding through various means such as conferencing, questioning, and other strategies. For example, in a 4th grade class, the teacher stopped students as they were working on responding to questions by providing textual clues and explaining prior knowledge when she saw that students were confusing the two. She gave a sample question and asked students to indicate whether it was prior knowledge or textual evidence and to explain why. When several students provided explanations, she allowed the class to continue.
- Regular checks for understanding extend to student peer- and self-reflection and assessment. Reflecting on her writing, a 5th grader wrote, "What I learned ... is that I could use a sound effect or motion to really hook the reader in my introduction." During a student meeting, students spoke about how they practice various forms of reflection and assessment. One student said, "We have a list with questions. We talk with a partner and we collaborate. Then we go back and fix and look through the rubric with our partner before publishing." Another student said, "My paragraph size was uneven. Some paragraphs were too long and some too short, so I revised my work."

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders convey high expectations to staff through the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Leadership and staff successfully communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness with families to support student progress.

Impact

School leaders' high expectations result in staff awareness of instructional expectations. Parents are aware of their children's academic progress as well as school-wide expectations leading to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations to all staff via staff memos and professional training. During a teacher meeting, every teacher spoke about the instructional focus on questioning and discussion with an emphasis on rigor. They spoke about incorporating Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DoK) into their lessons and tasks and various strategies to engage students in discussion including accountable talk stems and serving as facilitators to allow students time to think and talk.
- Professional development sessions are provided for all teachers to support them in achieving the school-wide instructional focus on questioning and discussion. Sessions have included, "Turn & Talk vs. Think-Pair-Share for H.O.T Questions", and a seven-part series entitled, "Promoting Quality Questioning and Discussion". Sessions for support for English language learners included a sample unit entitled, "People Live Together" with appropriate scaffolds.
- Written feedback to teachers holds them accountable for implementing school-wide expectations and includes specific observations, comments and next steps for teacher improvement in accordance with the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FfT) and the school-wide instructional focus. For example, one comment reads, "Your students participate in high level cognitive discourse, equipped to support their position with text evidence when responding to your questions ... Give each table/team a specific question that they have to interpret and respond to ... at a 3 or 4 level DoK."
- Families are afforded information and feedback regarding their children's progress through multiple means including progress reports, notes and emails sent home and phone calls. During a parent meeting, parents spoke about monthly newsletters that tell them what the teacher is focusing on in a particular grade. "My child's teacher," said one parent, "gives a newsletter every month to say what they're focusing on in each subject." Another said, "When they finish chapters, the teacher sends a paper home with the progress my child made." Still another parent declared, "Whenever I have a question, they're always responsive. They hear what I have to say. There's great communication. If they can't answer, they'll find someone who can."

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

The majority of teachers engage in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributive leadership structures allow teachers to have a voice in key decisions across the school.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has strengthened teacher collaboration resulting in improvement to pedagogical practice and a stronger voice in key decisions affecting student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams are structured to promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and strengthen the capacity of teachers through collaborative inquiry-based work. For example, the 2nd grade inquiry team observed followed a protocol as they examined Chapter 5 Go Math post assessment data to note students’ strengths, weaknesses and determining new approaches to instruction. A key issue for students was understanding and drawing the base ten block to regroup for subtraction. Collectively they determined to engage in close reading of the word problems to address comprehension, and introduce alternate ways of representation through drawing.
- The 1st grade team spoke about using a protocol to examine the January math benchmark assessment results. They saw that students showed difficulty overall due to the unfamiliar language of the test. As a team, they made decisions to create more explicit anchor charts for students to refer to and to pose questions that are similar linguistically to those on the benchmark assessment to expand students’ vocabulary and facilitate their test-taking skills.
- During a teacher team meeting, teachers spoke about having input into the topics and design of professional development. They take the lead in conducting grade-wide workshops including workshops for all teachers on English as a Second Language (ESL and Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies. Grade leaders have made decisions regarding curriculum modifications with input from teachers on the grade. For example, the 5th grade leader and team modified lessons requiring more focus on point of view.