



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Shakespeare School

09X199

**1449 Shakespeare Avenue
Bronx
NY 10452**

Principal: Lilia Navarrete

**Date of review: December 4, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Cheryl McClendon**

The School Context

The Shakespeare School is an elementary school with 797 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 31% Black, 68% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 26% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.0%.

School Quality Criteria

| Instructional Core | | |
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| <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 | 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 | 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

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

The majority of teachers engage in structured professional collaborations that are focused on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards instructional shifts and the attainment of school wide goals. Distributed leadership structures that are in place support the development of teacher leadership and teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Impact

Collaborative analysis of student work and the examination of key Common Core State Standards support teachers in strengthening their pedagogy, as teacher teams develop performance-based assessments and plan instruction that promotes improved achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- During a teacher team meeting teachers discussed their analysis of students' use of text-based evidence, paraphrasing and note-taking. Teachers shared that through on-going assessment and re-teaching, where necessary, students are developing greater proficiency in using text-based evidence. Teachers also reviewed several texts to come to consensus on a selection for the upcoming performance-based assessment.
- During a teacher team meeting, teachers were observed referring to a Common Core Standards rubric as they worked to identify common criteria to focus on in instructional planning and assessment. Teachers were also observed referring to their focus on specific instructional shifts in literacy, in keeping with school goals.
- In the beginning of the school year lead teachers polled all teachers to gather information about professional learning needs and reported this data to the administration to inform the professional learning agenda.
- The school has a School-based Staff Development Committee (SDC) that is comprised of one teacher from each grade, the guidance counselor, the data specialist and the instructional coaches. The SDC meets regularly to plan professional development activities for the teaching staff. They also turnkey information to their grade-level peers.
- The School-based Staff Development Committee and the teacher mentor program help to develop teacher capacity and build teacher leadership. For example, committee members include veteran teachers who serve as mentors for new teachers.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Although across classrooms teaching practices are beginning to reflect beliefs about how children learn best, as informed by the instructional shifts and the Danielson Framework for Teaching, students' discussions reflect uneven levels of thinking and participation.

Impact

A school wide focus on key instructional shifts supports the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. However, effective use of questioning and discussion techniques is not yet embedded in lessons across grades.

Supporting Evidence

- Practices such as the use of academic vocabulary and students citing evidence from the text were observed in most of the classrooms visited. For example, teachers use the Frayer model for vocabulary building. In addition, in a fifth grade classroom, students in small groups were engaged in responding to a feature article through varied modalities as the teacher circulated and provided feedback.
- Color-coded library bins, with green bins containing non-fictional texts and blue bins containing informational texts, reflected a balance of informational and literary texts within classrooms.
- Instruction was predominantly teacher-centered in the lower-grade classrooms that were visited. Students were seated on the carpet listening while the teacher spoke through a cordless microphone. At times the teacher passed a child the microphone to respond. The use of the cordless microphone was explained as an adaptive technology structure; however the interaction within these classrooms was predominantly teacher to student, without opportunities for student to student discussion.
- Student-led discussions were observed in some of the upper-grade classrooms. For example *Junior Great Books* fishbowl lessons were observed in two upper-grade classrooms. Students on the inner-circle engaged in literature-based discussion, citing evidence from the text, while the teachers facilitated by intermittently interjecting probing questions. Students on the outer-circle observed and listened. Outer-circle students in the first class were also recording their observations on a form. However students on the outer-circle in the second class were not recording their observations, as noted by the assistant principal during the hallway debrief. The assistant principal also indicated that feedback to that teacher would be to provide outer-circle students with more focused follow-up.

Additional Findings

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| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that Common Core-aligned curricula integrate the instructional shifts and build instructional coherence and college and career readiness. Student work and data are used to plan curricula and academic tasks that can provide access and cognitive engagement for a diversity of learners.

Impact

The ongoing refinement of the school-created interdisciplinary curriculum builds instructional coherence driven by Common Core-aligned curricula that support college and career readiness. The planning of scaffolds supports access to curricula by all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- The school continues to refine the school-created interdisciplinary units (English Language Arts, social studies and science) that were developed through a four-year (2010 -2014) partnership with Learning Centered Initiatives. Grade-level teams analyze student work derived from the units and ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards.
- Throughout the grades the interdisciplinary curriculum is developed through four theme-based units: Uniqueness, Change, Citizenship and Exploration. This embedded feature reflects the purposeful building of instructional coherence.
- The principal adopted the *Junior Great Books* program this year in grades 3, 4 and 5. *Estrellita*, a phonics-based program in Spanish is used to support English Language Learners and the school implements *Go Math*, which is fully-aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards.
- The school's articulated instructional focus is "Using questioning and discussion techniques". This is evident in every classroom school wide, where discussion norms are posted for student reference and use.
- Unit plans and lesson plans contain essential questions, standards, scaffolds for English Language Learners and students with disabilities, objectives, materials, key vocabulary formative assessment, mini-lesson components, and tiered differentiation plans.

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| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

Across classrooms teachers use curricula-aligned assessment practices that facilitate the sharing of actionable feedback to students and teachers. Teachers use common assessments to gauge student progress towards goals and make curricular adjustments.

Impact

The administration of a variety of assessments informs curricular adjustments. The use of rubrics to analyze student writing allows teachers to gauge students' writing progress and provide feedback for improving students' performance across content areas.

Supporting Evidence

- Students are assessed through the administration of pre and post unit assessments and data analysis from these assessments informs academic intervention. For example, formative assessment data is analyzed by teachers to plan differentiated tasks for weekly Skills Clinics that are held on Fridays. Teachers record data on a data analysis sheet and use the data to plan for English Language arts instruction during Skills Clinic.
- Fountas and Pinnell running records are usually administered four times per year during the benchmark period; however teachers now administer running records more frequently to gauge student reading progress, where necessary. The teachers' on-going analysis of running records to gauge students' readability level progress informs the planning of weekly guided reading instruction.
- The school has a standard 4 point grading policy which informs students about their levels of achievement on tasks. Teachers also use color-coded criteria charts to assess student work and provide feedback to students. Each chart highlights each Common Core Standard that is elicited within a task with a different color.
- Teachers across the grades use "7 Trait" writing rubrics to analyze student writing. Math assessments are administered to measure progress, with teachers recording the data on a data analysis sheet and using the data to plan for daily small group instruction

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| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and have an accountability system for those expectations. In turn, teacher teams and other staff convey high expectations for all students and provide ongoing feedback and guidance supports to prepare students for the next level.

Impact

The school has developed a culture that holds staff and students accountable for high expectations for learning, with systems and structures that support them in meeting those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Beginning of year memos, pamphlets, professional development meetings and one to one conferences communicate expectations to the teaching staff. For example, in September the principal distributed “Literacy – Expectations for the 2014-2015 Academic Year” to all teachers.
- The principal distributed to all teachers, a Mathematics guide containing a grid of previous year standardized test scores, school wide instructional math goals and grade level domains and fluencies. The principal also distributed the school’s instructional goals in reading writing and math and a list of professional development goals for the year.
- The administration distributed a memo to teachers detailing the importance of providing and checking homework on a daily basis, with a chart indicating required amount of minutes for homework assignments on each grade.
- Teachers are held accountable for student work displays. Bulletin boards are assessed through a 4-point bulletin board rubric which is posted near the display. Teachers and students are held accountable through the use of this rubric and students are held accountable to the rubric criteria and the school’s 4-point grading policy.
- Through the school wide implementation of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support program, school faculty reported that there is an increase in positive interactions between students and teachers, which positively impacts student progress.