



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 209

Early Childhood School X209

**313 East 183rd Street
Bronx
NY 10458**

Principal: Ann Keegan

**Date of review: February 2, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Matthew Angell**

The School Context

P.S. 209 is an early childhood school with 259 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 15% Black, 84% Hispanic, 1% other students.. The student body includes 27% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.7%.

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	Focus	Well Developed
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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across all classrooms, teacher practices were aligned to the curricula and a coherent set of beliefs informed by the Danielson framework and instructional shifts. Across the vast majority of classes, students were engaged in high-level discussion and produced high-level work products.

Impact

Ongoing school wide discussions on what best practices are and look like create consistent and effective structures for students to demonstrated their thinking and take ownership over their work.

Supporting Evidence

- Across all classrooms visited, students engaged in rigorous discussions in pairs and in flexible groups where they were able to explain their thinking and justify their answers with evidence. For example, in a kindergarten Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom students were in differentiated, skill specific groups. Each group had its own objectives and supports. In one small group, students with a partner, shared evidence that they achieve their goal of rereading to see if what they read made sense from a book on the five senses. Students were able to explain to their partner what they read and explain how they used the modeled strategy to assess their explanations.
- Across all classrooms visited, teachers provided students with differentiated tasks that matched student goals and provided individuals and groups, scaffolded supports to complete their tasks and demonstrate their thinking. For example, in one first grade ICT math lesson, teachers used the parallel teaching model to model for one-half of the class how to compare two digit numbers. During whole group, each teacher matched the groups by proficiency and used different methods to offer students the opportunity to practice using manipulatives. During group practice, student supports varied among the groups wherein some groups received manipulatives and a structured graphical organizer and other high level groups worked without the supports. Groups were provided scaffolded problems to solve. Students used a variety of methods to represent their numbers and support their solution within their group.
- Across all classrooms visited, teaching points were coherently aligned to the curricula and a coherent set of beliefs that emphasized higher-order questioning, differentiated scaffolds, meaningful feedback, and student ownership. All classrooms followed the same structure stated clearly for students as “We read. We think. We prove. We explain. We show. We understand.” In all classrooms visited, teachers reminded students of the expectations of that section. In all classrooms pedagogical practices observed yielded student work products, across a variety of learners, which matched the rigor and expectations of the curricula.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across grades and content areas, curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic task are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Although the curricular refinements based on student data has resulted in school-wide coherence and promotes college and career readiness the school is expanding upon its thematic curricula approach that engages learners in shared experiences to create equity among all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has created thematic units connected to four big ideas across grades and subjects: belonging, environment, responsibility, and change. All units, across subjects, include real world, shared experience that develops a shared prior knowledge, and an inquiry focus throughout the unit. For instance, in a second grade unit students took multiple field trips to New York City landmarks to begin a unit on communities. Students created a narrative piece of writing following the field trip and the unit concluded with students writing an informational piece based on the texts and activities they engaged in throughout the unit. Although the school is constantly improving the real world experience opportunities provided to students, there are plans to expand on the complexity of its themes.
- The school uses an online SharePoint site to capture their revisions and additions to their units after teacher team meetings. The curricula, across grades and subjects, are planned backwards from the assessments and identify the depth of knowledge required for each task or activity within the unit. Teacher teams meet with administration for periodic assessment meetings five times a year to analyze student progress for all students and further assessment revision. This structure has built coherence and consistency across the grade.
- Teachers refine curricula through lesson plans that identify important tier two and three vocabulary, checks for understanding questions, target student supports, scaffolded depth of knowledge questions, skill specific grouping, and group specific entry point supports to ensure engagement of all learners in discussion and tasks. However, a review of units of study revealed tasks for highest achieving students were not clearly identified and refined. Teacher teams revise units of study using pre and post-units of study assessment data, and student work. Units of study and lesson plans are revised to meet the needs of all students throughout the unit. However, while revised units identify the depth of knowledge required for activities and assessments there is room to expand higher level tasks opportunities for higher achieving students.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across all classrooms, teachers used curricula aligned assessments with rubrics that captured a clear portrait of student mastery. Teachers in every classroom consistently used varied checks for understanding throughout the lesson and students engaged in self-assessment through all group and independent activities.

Impact

Through the assessment data collected and meaningful feedback given to students both the teacher and students have a clear understanding of their progress and achievement. Effective adjustments during instruction and to future instruction ensure all students learning needs are met and that students are aware of their next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- For all classroom tasks, students used rubrics or checklists to self-assess their work. Within each student folder, and within all group work outlined for the week, students had to self-assess their progress. Rubrics varied by level thereby allowing students at all grade levels to participate in self-assessment. For example, during writing instruction observed in a 1st and 2nd grade classrooms, students used different colored crayons to underline evidence to support different areas of the rubric as they self-assessed and then peer-assessed a writing draft.
- In every classroom visited, teachers planned for varied types of checks for understanding within their lesson plan. Teachers drew information from conference notes, student assessment, and student self-assessment to identify key points within the lesson to check for student understanding as it relates to the lesson objective. During instruction, teachers listened into students doing turn and talks, cold called students during guided or group discussion, and conferenced with individual students. Teachers used this information to adapt groupings during transition and provide targeted supports to students.
- Teachers and school leaders track a variety of data such as pre and post unit assessments, Fountas & Pinnell running records, Measures of Student Learning math assessments, and ongoing in-class assessments. Teacher teams use this assessment data to inform their collaborative inquiry work, improve instructional supports for all learners, and provide meaningful feedback to students.
- All students have goals in their student work folder and students were able to speak to their goals and the feedback they get from their teachers. A review of student folders revealed that students have goals across subject areas. During the student meeting, one student said she was working on “using more linking words and a stronger conclusion”. Teachers monitor student goals weekly.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide professional development around those expectations. The school faculty effectively communicates those expectations to parents and partner with them to support students.

Impact

Faculty and parents work together as partners and hold themselves mutually accountable for student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school conducts monthly parent workshops called Common Core in Action. The workshops begin with a teacher presenting out to parents what is coming up in the curriculum over the next month and what strategies teachers are using. Parents learn the strategies and then go up to the classrooms to see the strategies in action. Parents are able to practice with their children at home. Parents stated they feel more connected to the learning and the opportunity to partner with their teacher in their child's learning.
- Teachers hold homework help sessions every other Tuesday for parents and students. Parents bring in their children and meet with the teacher to discuss recent homework and the strategies students are using at home. Parents stated that they attend workshops, homework help, and parent/teacher conferences to discuss their children's progress on the assessments they take every six to eight weeks.
- School leaders and staff have established a culture of mutual accountability through their teacher team work and professional development committee. Teachers use their feedback from observations and their team's inquiry focus to conduct intervisitation into each other's classroom. Teachers stated that the administration adjusts the schedule to ensure they learn from their colleague. In addition, school leaders and teachers participate in intervisitation with other schools through Showcase Schools. The principal conducts the first round of observations for all teachers accompanied by an assistant principal to establish a common understanding of teacher's strengths and areas of growth. In addition, school leaders and teachers conduct regular learning walks to give the staff feedback on patterns and trends across the school. Staff is updated through staff meetings, feedback memos, and a weekly principal's update.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaboration that strengthen teacher instructional capacity and promoted the implementation of Common Core learning standards. Teacher teams systemically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice, assessment data, and student work.

Impact

The work of teacher team is resulting in school-wide instructional coherence, improved teacher practice, and increased student achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers engage in structured inquiry that looks at all areas of instruction, assessment, and student work. For example, currently 2nd grade teachers are studying the use of manipulatives in math instruction and their impact of student's ability to problem solving. By looking at where and when the use of math manipulatives occurs within their lessons and looking at what strategies they were using, teachers developed short assessments in which students could and could not use manipulatives. In looking at the results over time, teachers are beginning to notice that the manipulatives help students in numeration skills, but impede their fluency development.
- Teacher teams use assessment data from pre and post unit assessments, across subjects, and student work to make informed decisions about curricula and pedagogical adjustments. Prior to the teacher team meeting, teachers review item analysis from a recent pre-unit assessment, selected anchor papers to represent current student understanding, and then each teacher analyzed their own student results. During the meeting, the team used a bucket protocol to identify the most important areas student struggled on including sub-categories for different groups of students. After identifying three key skills, teachers reviewed the upcoming unit plan to make adjustments and identifying important scaffolding supports.
- Teachers collaboratively plan and design all curriculum maps, and unit plans to ensure alignment to Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Teacher teams design each writing unit around classroom activities and field trips to build common prior knowledge. Students shared experiences and classroom readings become the foundation for student writing and tasks. Teacher teams use assessment data and student work to modify curricular experiences and ensure they are rigorous enough and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards.