



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Marble Hill

Elementary School X310

**260 West Kingsbridge Road
Bronx
NY 10463**

Principal: Elizabeth Cardona

**Date of review: January 22, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jo Ann Benoit**

The School Context

Marble Hill is an elementary school with 768 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 9% Black, 86% Hispanic, 3% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 18% 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 92.0%.

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	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	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school uses curricula that strategically integrate the Common Core Learning Standards, content standards, and the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned using student work and data and emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills.

Impact

As a result of refining and adjusting curricula and academic tasks aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards there is coherence across grades and subject areas, students have access to tasks that promote college and career readiness, and they are able to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- To support teachers in ensuring coherence across the grades, school leaders and teachers have embedded components into the unit and lesson plans to ensure alignment to the Common Core Standards and the instructional shifts, thus supporting teachers' understanding of the unit/lesson's big ideas. Furthermore, the school's unit and lesson plans, document essential and guiding questions and assessments for units and lessons across the grades and subject areas. Adjustments to lesson include increased opportunities for students to engage in non-fiction reading, response to reading tasks, and sufficient time for text-based classroom discussions. Math lessons were adjusted to include more time for problem solving and methodical discourse. In addition, the school has incorporated into planning the identification and listing of overviews, behaviors of readers at the different levels, mid-unit assessments, which were not in place the previous year, and thematic take-aways, for every literacy unit, and math investigation and real world problems in math, thus reinforcing further alignment.
- Higher order thinking questions were evidenced in both curricula maps and lessons reviewed, pushing students to be cognitively engaged and demonstrate their thinking. From a fifth grade lesson students were required to use the texts read to answer "Should junk food be banned altogether?" "Why is it difficult to define what junk food is?" In third grade, students needed to respond to "Do you think Mulan was right to disguise herself as a man? Why or why not? Students are required to use details from the text to support their response.
- Across lesson plans reviewed, teachers use student work to plan differentiated tasks, tools, and activities, to ensure students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, have access into the curricula. For some lessons, the graphic organizer was differentiated, for others supplemental materials were varied. For example, planning for different groups included structures such as reciprocal reading for some, individual read for others, and turn-and-talk for others. Additionally, some students had individual assignments such as "... will have the opportunity to go on the website kidshealth.org and listen in Spanish about the harmful effects of soda" thus helping students immerse in the topic.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and promote student participation.

Impact

Consequently, students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and are able to produce work and engage in discussions that reflect high levels of student thinking. However, not all students were involved in work and discussion that reflect high levels of participation and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- In a writing class, students were given three types of graphic organizers for writing an on-demand task. All three graphic organizers had questions that were based on the reading. One of the questions was inferential and text-based, while the other two were literal, text-dependent questions, with one of them scaffolded for students who needed support with their organization and sentence structures. In another class, first grade English language learners (ELLs) were presenting their work on three different types of doctors that they read about. Each group presented their information in English and one in both English and Spanish to allow one of the newcomer ELLs to participate in the presentation. In a math class, as students were solving problems, they were using different support tools that the teacher created for them, some were using a subtraction steps list, others a subtraction strategy list with visual representations of the calculations using either base 10 blocks, lining up the numbers, or using the number line, while, others didn't use either tool.
- Across classrooms, students worked collaboratively in groups on grade-level topics that promoted high levels of student thinking and participation. In two of the classrooms visited, students were engaged in reciprocal reading. One group was discussing the effects and characteristics of junk food. One student said "It's easier to gain weight than to lose weight." The group facilitator replied "What are some foods that can get you overweight?" Another student answered "oil... greasy...", and the facilitator interrupted with "let's dig deeper, what do you mean by greasy?" The second student proceeded by relating a story about his mother telling him of some of the cooking processes in Chinese restaurants. However, the conversation moved away from the text and some students were not able to get back on track. Moreover, only one group participated in reciprocal reading, while the others were reading independently and sharing their reading with their classmates, not allowing all of the students to reflect the same level of ownership in their learning.
- Across classrooms, the levels of engagement for students were high. However, many of the student interactions were facilitated by the teachers. In nearly half of the classrooms visited, student interactions were dependent on teacher intervention as students were answering teacher questions and/or waiting on the teacher to prompt them to reply to a classmate during discussions. In two classrooms, some students did not interact with their teachers during the lesson leaving them confused either about the content or the process throughout the lesson. One lower grade student shared that sometimes, when he needs help, he does not get to speak to the teacher during the lesson and thus does not feel supported.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies, that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Teachers' assessment practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Across classrooms, teachers are able to provide actionable feedback to students and adjust curricula and instruction to meet the learning needs of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers create and adapt various rubrics and assessments that are developmentally appropriate for their students. In kindergarten through grade 2, rubrics and checklists are accompanied by visuals which describe the criteria being evaluated. The student work reviewed and those displayed in classrooms showed evidence of actionable feedback given to students. However, not all displayed work included specific next steps to support students in their future work.
- The school regularly monitors its data. It generates school wide data reports to provide information to teachers on student achievement. It uses many common assessments to determine student progress towards goals. The TCRWP Running Records are administered five times a year. Simulations and unit tests offer pre- mid- and post-assessments that teachers grade collaboratively to identify trends across grades and content areas. The midline data analyzed in reading showed a drop in Levels 1 and 2 across the grades and increases in Levels 3 and 4, relative to 36 percentage points and 7 percentage points respectively.
- Across classrooms, student self-assessment and peer assessment are staples as students consistently use rubrics and checklists to evaluate their own and their classmates' work. For example, in one class, students used a checklist with the ratings "stuck, getting there, right on track and I've got it" to assess their work in reading but they also had a self-assessment checklist to assess the way they worked at their centers. In other classrooms, students who were engaged in reciprocal reading were following a group process and were holding each other accountable for the expectations.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide supports to meet those expectations. The school consistently communicates expectations connected to college and career readiness to families.

Impact

As a result, there exists a system of accountability in the school around these expectations and families understand student progress towards those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Throughout the school year, school leaders communicate the school's goals, vision, mission, and expectations to teachers. In the beginning of the year, a presentation is shared with the staff on what teachers and students are expected to do and engage in. Data is shared school wide as well as implications for the work of the school. The principal reiterates in bulletins disseminated bi-weekly the expectations and the supports that are in place to help teachers meet the expectations. A professional calendar, as well as an instructional focus calendar, is shared. Additional support is given through assistant principals who meet with teachers to set professional goals aligned to the school goals and teachers' needs and staff are monitored throughout the year.
- School leaders have put in place systems that allow teachers to receive feedback and supports to meet the expectations. The school's instructional focus calendar centers on walkthroughs done in classrooms where non-evaluative feedback is given to teachers. These walkthroughs help the administration and the leadership team calibrate their understanding of the best practices in teacher pedagogy as informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The foci for the walkthroughs are set by the leadership team, which includes teacher leaders. Teachers are also involved in a math lesson study piloted in the fourth grade which supports them in the implementation of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, content, and other aspects of their profession. During one of the teacher team interviews, one teacher said "there is not one teacher here that can say working with the principal has not moved their practice".
- Families are offered a wide range of ways to communicate with the school and receive information on their children's progress. Besides making calls, sending emails and newsletters home, among other ways, families also attend workshop facilitated by teachers on a variety of topics such as the Common Core, math homework, cyber safety, and how to understand reading levels. These help them understand the work that their children are engaged in and provide them with the supports needed to help their children.

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice and data and distributive leadership structures are embedded in their work.

Impact

There is school wide instructional coherence and students' achievement has increased. The work of teacher teams has brought about improvements in teacher practice as well as allowed teachers to play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers meet collaboratively several times a week during grade team meetings, "hot" topic professional developments, whole staff meetings, and/or during their mini school vertical team meetings. They also participate in lab sites, lesson studies and walkthroughs that allow them to analyze both student work and teacher practice. As a result of teachers' consistent analysis of the data, and their work to bring about instructional coherence through their practice throughout the grades and content areas, data evidences improvement in student achievement both at the macro level with increases in the State exams in math, an increase of 9%, and an increase of 3% in ELA. At the micro level there are increases in scores from the simulations and unit tests. For example, in math, all indicators show a decrease in Level 1 and an increase in Levels 3 and 4, and in literacy, there is an increase of 7% of students moving to grade level.
- Teachers fill out surveys to identify professional development opportunities in which they want to participate as well as offer., Teachers have facilitated offerings of professional development during cycles of PD, on creating guiding questions to support the text and big idea, what is quality discussion, and how do we assess it, and fostering a systematic approach to running records. Additionally, teachers choose the hot topics they attend and have the opportunity to flip their team's foci when necessary. They have choice in topics they feel will move their practice. Close to two-thirds of teachers have said in a survey that their practice has improved because of the sustained professional development they received this year around guided and reciprocal reading strategies.
- One teacher shared, during the teachers' question and answer session, "every teacher is seen as a leader". She mentioned this after explaining the different ways teachers get to practice their leadership skills: they mentor one another, lead teacher teams, lead professional development, help set the professional development calendar and participate in learning walks with the administration. They help make decisions that affect their colleagues and students school wide.