



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Linden Tree

**Public School X567
1560 Purdy Street
Bronx
NY 10462**

Principal: Lisa DeBonis

**Date of review: November 14, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr**

The School Context

Linden Tree is an elementary school with 212 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 15% Black, 67% Hispanic, 3% White, 13% Asian, 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 1% Multi-Racial students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 91.0%.

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	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	Additional Findings	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	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	Celebration	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Parents are key partners in their children's education and are kept well informed of school programs and their children's needs to effectively support learning in order for all constituents to collaboratively work toward attaining the school's goals.

Impact

There is a culture of shared accountability regarding the school's goals and high expectations, and students are supported on a path to college and career readiness by staff and families together.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal conveys high expectations throughout the school via summer curriculum meetings, a faculty handbook, initial planning conferences, Monday professional development activities, and intervisitations replete with norming activities.
- The principal and assistant principal conduct daily visits and advance visits to all classrooms. After these visits they provide immediate feedback to teachers to inform best practices and instructional strategies. Supports are tiered and to address the specific needs of all teachers. Professional development allows teachers to learn together and from one another. These strategies have built collaboration and collegiality. There is a deepening of practice to provide targeted instruction to all students.
- Parents report that ongoing feedback is provided through Parent Teacher Association meetings, curriculum meetings, monthly celebrations, progress reports, a website, Facebook, a monthly blog as well as guidance supports. The work is proving successful, as indicated by the 2013-2014 School Survey where 96-99% of respondents reported being satisfied with the school's instruction, systems for improvement, and culture.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The school uses a variety of assessments that are aligned to the curriculum but results are not consistently used to monitor student progress to meet the needs of all students.

Impact

Teachers use common assessments to monitor student needs, strengths, and achievement but they do not consistently use the results to support targeted instruction across core content areas.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers deconstruct Developmental Reading Assessment results to compare students' scores with the previous year to develop action plans. However, formative classroom data is not consistently used to address specific instructional needs of students.
- Across classrooms teachers do not consistently catalog student work products nor are students regularly provided with actionable feedback. This inhibits teachers from systematically targeting instruction to address the unique needs of students.
- Evaluation of student work is one indicator for differentiated goal setting. However, student self-assessment, teacher commendations, recommendations, and next steps along with opportunities for enrichment are currently practiced inconsistently across classrooms.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school utilizes a Common Core aligned curricula that offers meaningful learning experiences that challenges students and supports their learning.

Impact

The Common Core aligned curricula promotes college and career readiness and higher order opportunities for student learning to take place.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty meet regularly to evaluate curricula and their impact on student learning. The school prioritizes informational texts and academic vocabulary in the majority of classrooms. Across classrooms, students reference textual evidence in their written and oral responses. Math activities prioritize application of learned skills, such as charting of weather. The school emphasizes students' personal behavior that is grounded in a rubric that promotes college and career readiness.
- The school uses the Depth of Knowledge Levels in planning to guide teachers' questioning and discussion techniques. Teachers meet in grade teams and as an entire school to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment.
- One first grade science unit aligned curricula to the Bronx Zoo via class trips to observe animal adaptations. Texts were used to enhance understanding, which in turn informed student writing.
- Kindergarten students experience community work and horticulture via gardening activities and related texts. Second grade students learned and experienced land formations by visiting students in Far Rockaway, New York which was devastated by Hurricane Sandy.
- A push-in Special Education Support Service teacher supports students with writing using visual aids. The use of manipulatives support students learning and cognitive learning preferences. These decisions are aligned to the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teaching practices across the school reflect a common belief about how students learn best to meet the varied needs of students.

Impact

Students demonstrate high levels of engagement, good behavior, and enthusiasm for learning. Tasks have students learning through experiences, collaboration, and discovery.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's core belief about how students learn best is based on learning through experiences, collaboration and discovery. All classrooms visited had posted "I can" statements that informs students of what they will learn and can learn. Charts that prioritize reading strategies and school wide behavioral expectations were evident across classrooms to support student thinking. The school's philosophy is that all students can meet grade level expectations with scaffolds and supports.
- A first grade teachers' questioning and discussion techniques, focusing on Depth of Knowledge Levels 1-4, provided multiple entry points that empowered students to demonstrate their knowledge of learning targets. Some students were observed writing independently to recall elements and details from the end of the story, Peter's Chair. Another group of students were supporting their ideas with specific details from the story. They then reported their findings and compared their work with a partner.
- White boards, modeling, differentiated tasks, and bookmark language supports are used as additional supports for all scholars including English language learners and students with disabilities.
- Professional development activities, teacher support, and resources are structures that ensure coherent instructional practices. Professional development provided has helped teachers in proving effective feedback to students, Common Core standards, instructional shifts, and students' academic and personal behavior rubrics. Each classroom has components of this rubric embedded in classroom practice. For example collaboration, communication expectations, and strong work habits are all consistent expectations for student behavior and learning.
- Language objectives are embedded in curriculum units and the Positive Behavior Intervention Program. Students incorporate high level words through discussion and collaboration activities to successfully complete tasks that emphasize stamina

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

Teachers are engaged in structured inquiry work to enhance leadership and student learning.

Impact

Teams of teachers effectively share responsibility for cohorts of students on each grade and successfully plan together to enhance student performance and progress.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade teams disseminate information, share ideas, materials, curriculum components, and collaborate regarding the differentiation of instruction. Kindergarten teachers' priority is improving students' reading and writing abilities. Grade 1 teachers are focusing on improving students' use of including details in their writing. The grade 2 focus is on referencing text in writing projects. The principal reports consistency in classroom practice around engagement, use of non-fiction texts, and application of skills, and this was evidenced during class observations.
- Since the school does not have an instructional coach, each grade has selected one teacher to assist with curricular expectations. These individuals confer with the principal to discuss curricula expectations, disseminate information and participate in conversations regarding materials and data that inform the differentiation of instruction.
- The school departmentalizes for literacy and math. The school uses summative and formative data to determine student placement and inform instructional next steps. For example, once per month teacher teams review student work and data to ensure that they are in the appropriate reading and math group. These efforts ensure that teachers are part of key decisions to positively affect student learning across the school.