



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

PS/IS 30 Mary White Ovington

Elementary-Middle School K030

**7002 4th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11209**

Principal: Carol Heeraman

**Date of review: February 9, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley**

The School Context

PS/IS 30 Mary White Ovington is an elementary-middle school with 716 students from kindergarten through grade 8. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 20% Asian, 2% Black, 30% Hispanic, and 48% White students. The student body includes 26% English Language Learners and 16% students with disabilities. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 95.2%.

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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , 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	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:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Higher-order skills emphasized in curricula and tasks are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact

Coherence across grades and subjects promotes college and career readiness tasks that require all learners to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Over the past three years the school has worked to align their curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards, adopting the New York City Department of Education approved Common Core curricula following the scope and sequence for each subject. In the elementary grades the curricula includes *Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA)*, *Foundations* and *GO Math!* In grades 6 through 8 the school uses *Expeditionary Learning*, *CMP3*, *EngageNY*, *New York City Science Scope and Sequence*, *New York City Social Studies Scope and Sequence*, and *iLearn Blended Learning*. Last year the school joined Learning Partners and worked with a partner school to strengthen their integration of the instructional shifts throughout the curriculum.
- The school has adopted the book *Making Thinking Visible* (MTV) as a touchstone text and utilizes MTV strategies to incorporate the instructional shifts across grades and subjects. An English Language Arts (ELA) lesson included plans for a “circle of viewpoints” as both an activity and assessment of learning. The lesson integrates ELA Instructional Shift Two Knowledge in the Disciplines, as students are expected to build knowledge about assimilation to American culture through the reading and discussion of a text.
- A school-wide focus on “disciplinary literacy” promotes and builds content-based vocabulary and language. The vast majority of lesson plans viewed included academic vocabulary specific to the content area. A social studies lesson plan included the vocabulary assimilation, discrimination, perceive, perception, and perspective and a science lesson, the vocabulary words, conduction, convection, radiation, joule, and watt.
- The vast majority of lessons included essential questions and tasks aligned to Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* Levels 3 and 4. A science lesson included the essential question, “How does life change over time?” An ELA lesson asked, “How do critical incidents reveal character?” A social studies lesson plan included the question, “How did the geography of China affect the settlement of the early Chinese civilization?”
- Lesson plans collected offered multiple means for students to acquire information and demonstrate what they know in the Universal Design for Learning-aligned curriculum. An ELA lesson stated, “Students can use the class notes, the visual aids (picture clues next to the notes) and the word wall to compose their informational texts.”

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, questioning and scaffolds consistently provide multiple entry points for all learners, however teaching practices do not strategically provide multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions into the curricula.

Impact

Although student work products and discussions reflect high levels of thinking, a lack of strategic planning of strategies creates missed opportunities to push student thinking further and allow students to take full ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- In an ELA class, as students read a text about a teacher who was trying to help a student resolve a problem, the classroom teacher posed the question, “What can the teacher do?” One student responded, “The teacher cannot ask her in front of everyone.” Another student added, “She needs a friend. I read this book, *American Chinese*, he had a friend who was also an immigrant. It helped.”
- The school uses the MTV strategy, “Chalk Talk,” to provide multiple entry points into academic tasks. Using this method students walk around the room in groups and respond to teacher or peer prompts or visual stimuli at gallery stations. This method allows students to share their responses and discuss them with their peers before providing a written response. In a math classroom, students were strategically grouped and English Language Learners (ELLs) worked on a less lengthy set of problems with teacher support. A teacher worked with ELL students asking them specific questions to push their thinking but did not provide them with the answers. This level of support and extensions for ELLs and students with disabilities was prevalent across grades and subjects; however, similar extensions for higher performing students were not evident.
- In a science classroom, students worked in small groups to investigate different methods of asexual reproduction. Students created presentation boards that described, depicted, and provided examples of regeneration, budding, binary fission, and vegetative propagation. In groups, they discussed and began to analyze the information collected from a variety of informational sources to construct a graphic organizer and prepare to explain the phenomena of asexual reproduction and a variety of scientific concepts to their classmates.
- In a science classroom, students worked in small groups to respond to a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) design challenge. Students designed a model thermal protection system similar to the Ares launch vehicles being designed at the Marshall Space Flight Center. Each group is testing their model’s ability to withstand heat before reaching life threatening levels. After each trial students receive feedback from the teacher and peers, analyze their results and redesign their model for better results. The level of student ownership of the learning experience present in this classroom was not yet evident in the vast majority of classrooms.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use and create assessments and rubrics that offer a clear portrait of student mastery and use common assessments to track student progress and to inform curricula and instructional adjustments.

Impact

Assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers so that key curricula adjustments are made so that all students demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- All rubrics are based on a Level 1, 2, 3, or 4 scale and list the content specific characteristics at each level. Teachers supplement rubric scores with specific feedback for individual students. Teacher feedback on a Level 4 project stated, “Your ideas are clearly and effectively conveyed. Good use of details and quotes from your research.” Teacher feedback on a Level 3 writing response stated, “You began with a topic sentence. Your overall response responds to the prompt, however more details are needed to support your analysis.”
- During the student interview, five out of six students shared that they receive feedback on their work all or most of the time. Students were able to explain the rubrics associated with their work and share next steps in their learning. One student stated that he lost points because of grammar and that he needs to make sure he uses quotes from the text to support his answers. Another student stated that she needs to improve her conclusion sentences and grammar. Students in a science class shared that the feedback they received from the teacher helped them to decide how to improve their thermal protection system for the next trial run.
- All students across grades and content areas take a baseline beginning-of-the-year (BOY) assessment in September, a middle-of-the-year (MOY) assessment in January, and an end-of-the-year (EOY) assessment in May and June. This year all students also took a pre-test and will take a post-assessment in ELA, math, science, and social studies. In addition to these common assessments, teachers administer end-of-unit assessments and benchmark assessments twice a year.
- Teachers use assessment data to determine skills students have mastered and skills yet to be achieved and place students in “what I need” (WIN) groups. WIN groups are flexible groups where students work on strategies they need to improve. During classroom visits students were observed in WIN groups. Based on MOY ELA assessments students in kindergarten through grade 2 have shown a 10% growth in performance compared to the BOY ELA assessment results.
- Revisions to an opinion-writing lesson plan stated, “Students had difficulty writing first drafts. Reteach. Make sure appropriate evidence is on the graphic organizer.” A post assessment “scaffolded instruction” planning sheet stated, “Students struggle to understand that temporal words show the sequence of events in a story...use language analysis support.”

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders provide training and consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. Teacher teams and staff systematically communicate high expectations for all students.

Impact

High expectations for all result in a culture of mutual accountability and students are prepared for the next level of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate expectations for learning during team meetings, faculty meetings, informal observations, and via email. Teacher leaders represent their colleagues in leadership meetings with school leadership and support communication of high expectations to faculty in grade and content team meetings. The school has provided professional development to support schoolwide foci including professional development in Making Thinking Visible, Learning Partners, and Disciplinary Literacy.
- Teachers meet for common planning led by teacher leaders and hold each other accountable for common plans. Teachers provide one another with feedback and recommended next steps for target students using a schoolwide tuning protocol. Teachers provide colleagues with follow-up reports on the progress of targeted students after recommended strategies are implemented. The math grade team used the Looking at Student Work protocol and recorded recommendations in meeting notes and made plans for a follow up presentation of the students' work after recommendations were implemented.
- Teachers prepare kindergarten students for the structures and routines of upper elementary by using similar teaching components such as learning to take notes during the mini-lesson. Note taking and deciding on the key details to add to their individual and class notes build skills kindergarteners can apply in the next grades. Grade 6 students are prepared for middle school during the first months of school. Grade 7 students meet with counselors to prepare for the high school application process. One parent shared that her son came home from the first high school application session "interested in high school for the first time."
- Teachers and staff support grade 8 students through the high school application process and have students practice completing high school and college applications. Students write personal statements for the high school application and teachers use a *Personal Statement Rubric* to assess the statements and provide feedback for improvement. Feedback on a statement graded Level 2 stated, "Research specific courses of study offered by the school. Include how you hope to learn from these courses." Grade 8 students have the opportunity to take up to six high school credits. The school offers Regents courses in Living Environment, Algebra One, and US History.
- The school adorns the school hallways with photos and biographies of "Winners and Achievers." Each school classroom is named after a winner or achiever and students learn about the accomplishments of that role model. Students created fantasy colleges to learn about what colleges have to offer and the different types of colleges available. Fantasy college reports included whether or not the fantasy college was public or private, what the school mascot, school colors, and the educational focus were.

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

Teachers systematically analyze key elements of teacher work and distributive leadership structures are embedded.

Impact

Systematic work results in shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students. Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Content teacher teams use a *PS/IS 30 Tuning Protocol* to provide feedback on key elements of teacher practice after analyzing student work. Each week a different grade-level teacher presents student work and poses an instructional focus question. During the math team meeting the teacher presented packets of student work for three targeted students currently performing in the lowest third for math. The packet included a baseline assessment from September, follow up assignments, and an end of January assessment. The teacher asked, “What strategies/supports can I use to accelerate learning of students in an effort to prevent gaps in conceptual understanding, bring their skills and fluency to the appropriate level, or go deeper into the content?”
- During the math team meeting, teachers analyzed student work and offered specific strategies to enhance the teaching practice for the target students. Analysis highlighted a gap between guided and independent practice. Team members suggested that the teacher offer less teacher-directed guidance to students by strategically removing scaffolds to support student independence, and by increasing partner work and peer support. The presenting teacher agreed to provide practice questions to wean students off scaffolds before reassessing.
- During teacher meetings, teachers shared ways in which teamwork has improved their practice. One teacher shared that he used to give students too many questions that were all the same and that the tuning protocol feedback helped him to focus on the quality of his questions and target questions to assess particular skills. A teacher added that the team setting allows teachers to improve lessons in the meeting and return to the classroom with better instruction. Another teacher added that the vertical format builds consistency across the grades, “We apply the same strategies across the grades, and it supports learning for our students. We have the same notebook set up, board configuration, and journals.” A grade 6 teacher also noted that it improves her practice to see what students are expected to be able to do in grade 7 and 8.
- Teacher leaders facilitate department meetings, organize grade level assemblies, and lead professional development sessions for teams of teachers. Teachers hold key positions in the school including dean, coach, special education liaison, English as a New Language (ENL) coordinator, and Science Technology Engineering Art and Mathematics (STEAM) coordinator. Teachers play an integral role in professional development decisions. Teachers requested professional learning sessions on unpacking the Common Core Learning Standards and guided reading strategies. Teachers pushed for the *Leader in Me* program, which is now used schoolwide to support college and career readiness.