



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 044 Marcus Garvey

Elementary School K044

**432 Monroe Street
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Roxanne James

**Date of review: March 1, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Gary Knight**

The School Context

P.S. 044 Marcus Garvey is an elementary school with 226 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 3% Asian, 83% Black, 10% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 6% English Language Learners and 15% students with disabilities. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 90.2%.

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	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 <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	Celebration	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

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 towards goals across grades and subjects.

Impact

Assessment practices provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement and results are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses *Degrees of Reading Assessment (DRA)*, *Ready Gen* and *GoMath!* end-of-unit assessments as a means of determining student progress. The school also conducts on-demand writing performance tasks and Measures of Student Learning in English Language Arts to assess student performance. The *DRA* and *GoMath!* tests are administered at the beginning, middle, and end-of-year. For example, *GoMath!* data that was tracked, analyzed, and charted, was based on test results from October and January, and was divided into the following categories, scored 0-69%, 70-79%, 80-89%, and 90-100%. The kindergarten through grade 2 data revealed an 18.5% decrease in students that scored within the 0-69% category, 10% increase in 70-79%, 4.1% increase in 80-89% and 4.1% increase in the 90-100% category. Based on findings, the students were then grouped by tier and either provided small group, intensive/individualized instruction, or placed with a student group that is on at or above grade level.
- Teachers use the narrative writing rubrics, standards-based math rubrics, an "I Get It" student rubric for science inquiry, which includes a self- and a pair-checklist, an opinion-writing checklist, and each teacher has a tool for creating formative assessments and checking for understanding processing activities. These documents provide feedback to students regarding progress. Students receive comments on math assignments such as, "great improvement in solving an exemplar problem. You chose a correct strategy and solved the problem correctly. Continue to work on making connections and looking for patterns. Work on using other strategies to check your answer."
- Based on review of documentation, the evidence showed that teachers have a system in place for ongoing progress monitoring of student performance using a *GoMath!* Progress Checklist, which captures student performance based on standards covered in each chapter. Teachers fill the grid with either an 'A' for acquired, 'P' for partial, or 'N' for no skill acquired, as it relates to each standard. This process also includes math-conferring notes on how students are addressing the focus of the content and ways in which the teacher will approach future instruction for each identified student. For example, notes for a student read, "...content focus to be order and operations, based on observations the student is still having difficulty with addition and subtraction facts and tier 3 grouping, coaching will be to work with fluency in addition and subtraction and the plan is to have student partner with a peer using flash cards.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Lessons included the instructional shifts as noted in the Common Core Learning Standards, such as academic vocabulary and text-based answers for English Language Arts, and fluency and application for math. A social studies geography lesson incorporated the use of content specific vocabulary such as climate, urban, suburban, rural, shelter, and climate. Students were expected to recognize the kinds of communities they live in and apply the appropriate vocabulary, however, based on students' incorrect responses with the task; there were missed opportunities to review word meanings to further build comprehension.
- Teaching practices differentiated assigned tasks and scaffolded learning with tiered groupings, picture support, graphic organizers, and questioning. An Integrated Co-teaching Class (ICT) lesson included a tiered independent practice portion of the lesson. Students were expected to write realistic fiction stories. Tier 1 students were to use the paper with five or more lines and work on their own. Tier 2 students were to use paper with at least three lines and be given assistance in organizing their thoughts. Tier 3 students used paper with one line and were provided assistance in organizing their thoughts using picture prompts as a support. Similarly, in a grade 4 math lesson, students were grouped with varying levels of support including online reinforcement. Students on grade level worked on their own and those above level worked on their own with an enrichment activity. In a grade 5 math class, three English Language Learners were receiving skill reinforcement on the computer.
- Teachers were observed providing multiple entry points through open-ended questioning strategies that allowed students to engage in appropriately challenging thinking. For example, during a math lesson students were to identify, describe, and create numeric patterns with fractions. Students were then asked, "What should you do when you have varying denominators?" Additionally they were asked about the purpose of multiplying and were pushed to explain their thinking as they responded. As a student was explaining his answer, he was able to self-correct his response. In another class, the teacher posed the question, "Why is repeated subtraction a good strategy for division by 10?" Although effective questions were presented across classrooms, this was not the case in the vast majority. Some teachers presented a pattern of lower level recalling questions, such as that observed in grade 2 social studies lesson where students were asked, "What's on a farm? What is a treehouse?" Lower level thinking and questioning were also observed in a third class. Some examples of questions of questions asked were, "Is the pattern increasing or decreasing?" and "Which number is largest?" with no explanation required.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

The school's curricula promote college and career readiness. A diversity of learners has access to the curricula and is cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses approved programs aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, which include the infusion of instructional shifts in science and math. In addition to the main curricula resources, *Teachers College Writing* and *Good Habits Good Readers* are used as supplements for writing and reading. The teachers use a standard template across grades and content for curriculum maps, which includes essential questions, guiding questions, performance tasks, vocabulary, and formative and summative assessments. Each curriculum map embeds Common Core concepts, such as a grade 3 math curriculum document that addresses fluency in multiplying and dividing. A grade 4 reading curriculum incorporates supporting responses with details and examples.
- As the school works to refine the curricula, changes from last year to this year were identified in documents that were effected based on data and the need for more skills reinforcement and supporting writing around point of view. Some of the changes noted in the math curricula include additional performance tasks with exemplar tasks, the addition of summative assessments, and writing in math that includes writing opinion piece on a math topic. In English Language Arts, persuasive essay writing using at least two strategies was added, along with new strategies and additional resources to scaffold the task.
- A diversity of learners is provided access through the provision of differentiated planning. A grade 3 lesson document has color-coded tiered groupings for an independent activity, with each group performing different tasks. Similarly, in a grade 3 class, a social studies unit plan on geography included activities for tiered groupings. During independent practice, the Tier 1 group had to draw a map of their classroom, Tier 2 used a word web to fill in important information about the maps, and Tier 3 worked with the teacher to fill in a word web using important information about maps.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. School leaders and staff consistently communicate to students and parents expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

The school's staff is provided training and school leadership have a system of accountability for meeting the expectations. School leaders and staff help families understand their children's progress toward set expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates expectations to staff regarding creating student-centered, rigorous, and engaging classrooms, in various ways, including but not limited to monthly grade specific memos, monthly calendars, letters, and a staff handbook. Professional development sessions are also used as a mechanism for relaying and reinforcing expectations. Based on a review of evidence, a grade 3 through 5 professional development agenda's focus was school culture and academic rigor and included the school's mission and vision statements, academic rigor, professional development collaborations, and next steps.
- The administrative team and staff shared that both formal and informal classroom observation are conducted regularly with ongoing feedback provided, and used as a tool to monitor the execution of topics addressed during workshop trainings. When staff was asked about a system of accountability regarding expectations, one teacher responded, "The principal ensures that practices discussed during trainings are implemented in the classroom." It was also stated by other teachers that the principal makes multiple visits and provides ongoing feedback as necessary.
- A Family Handbook is provided to families and addresses areas including the school's mission, the principal's vision, learning expectations, student progress, the middle school application process, and promotion criteria. As it relates to learning expectations, the handbook addresses rigorous and comprehensive Common Core-aligned classes and that all students are to achieve work that reaches grade level standard or above, every year. A parent compact that is also provided, addresses the school and parents working cooperatively to provide for the successful education of their children. This is done through participation in activities such as curriculum and content specific professional development workshops for parents.

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students they share or whom they are focused on.

Impact

The inquiry-based collaborations strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers, typically resulting in improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's structure allows for grade level and vertical teams, kindergarten through grade 2 and grades 3 to 5, which engage in weekly professional collaborations regarding curricula, grade level standards, and analyzing student work. Other teams include Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), and professional development. There is also the administrative team comprised of the principal and assistant principal that meets with team leaders to maintain the line of communication and provide a system of accountability for what is happening within the teams.
- During an observation of the grade 3 through 5 vertical team meeting, teachers were looking at samples of student work. A teacher presented writing of three students relative to an extended response using text evidence to support claim. This was an area of focus based on student performance on the Degrees of Reading Assessment (DRA) that revealed students were not including enough text detail, relevant detail, or writing enough information. As a result, teachers looked at the students work, identifying noticings such as students' writing had a focused introduction and made inferencing but needed to further analyze text. Another student had a partially developed writing piece with an attempt to make inferences, while a third needed more processing time. The implications for practice identified were to build students' inferencing and analysis skills. Next steps included giving writing prompts, building writing stamina by gradually increasing the writing task, and providing more time.
- Teachers articulated that the engagement in structured collaborations has afforded them the opportunity to analyze student data from other grade levels and determine the necessary skills and concepts to be taught. Further, the work provides additional insight for teaching at different levels to ensure mastery of skills. Teachers also stated that the sharing of best practices, strategies, and resources, has been a great support in guiding their instructional decisions and implementation of strategies. Because of the collaborations, staff is now implementing common strategies across the grades and students are applying R.A.C.E, restate the question, answer, provide claim, and evidence, when answering short response questions. As a result the quality of student writing has improved.