



# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**P.S. 128 Bensonhurst**

**Elementary School K128**

**2075 84<sup>th</sup> Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11214**

**Principal: Jessica Drzewucki**

**Date of review: March 22, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Audrey Madison**

## The School Context

P.S. 128 Bensonhurst is an elementary school with 425 students from pre- kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 30% Asian, 1% Black, 18% Hispanic, and 51% White students. The student body includes 41% English Language Learners and 16% students with disabilities. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 95.8%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

All teachers use assessments, rubrics and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula in order to create a clear picture of student progress toward school goals and make instructional adjustments as staff track student progress.

### Impact

Assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback regarding student achievement so that all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, demonstrate increased mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher use of rubrics to provide feedback to students was apparent across content areas with component criteria such as, use of domain specific science vocabulary or the use of historical background and multiple documents. A fifth grade student declared, "We have rubrics and checklists for every task to guide us to do really good work and get good scores." As a third grader discussed his math work, he added, "One thing I forgot was to use my checklist. I did some things wrong but I corrected them and got a score of 3." Another student shared his social studies essay and stated, "I gave good details and cited from text but need to work on using more than one text."
- Classroom teachers use a school-wide tool to collect and examine assessment data for each student and monitor for progress with midyear and end year comparisons made to fall data. At a glance, teachers articulate student performance levels and growth based on Developmental Reading Assessments, benchmark and unit math assessments and writing pieces scored using Teachers College (TC) writing rubrics. This data is used at the teacher level to make instructional decisions such as targeting students for inquiry or recommending students to the response to intervention team.
- School documents reveal ongoing monitoring of student progress in writing for the structure, development and language conventions components of the TC writing rubric. For example, a fourth grade teacher's data document reflects that although in the fall, 31 students scored level 1 in structure for both narrative and informational writing, six students have progressed to level 3, 18 students have scored level 2 on their published narratives. On published informational pieces, 15 students improved to level 3, and nine students scored level 2.
- The use of individual class data is further analyzed by teams and school leaders, who have all indicated progress toward their school-wide writing goal. Thus far, the midyear goal has been achieved, as 30% of students in kindergarten through fifth grade have met the goal of scoring five overall rubric points between the structure and development components. School-wide analysis also shows that at present, 42% of all students have increased at least one full grade level in writing.

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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### Findings

Teaching strategies provide consistent instructional supports and questioning and discussion techniques engage students in learning. However, multiple entry points are not yet strategically utilized to promote deeper levels of higher- order thinking.

### Impact

While all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher- order thinking skills, there are missed opportunities for students to take ownership of discussions and work products that reflect mastery of learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- In preparation for study of how Mexico became independent from Spain, a fifth grade teacher charted what students already knew about why countries would want independence from another country onto a KWL chart. Students were asked to turn and talk about things they would want to know. "I would want to learn how did the king of Spain become king." Since Mexico was fighting for independence, another student wanted to know who won the fight. Third grade students in the same class worked with another teacher who provided push- in support. On a KWL chart, the teacher recorded student questions about a projected picture of Venice, as they prepared to learn about the diverse geographic features of the continent of Europe.
- Presented with different group investigations, such as, "Will the car roll further on the tile floor or a notebook?" "Which will roll further, the small car or the big car?" "Will the car roll further with a lower ramp or higher ramp?" Second graders finished up their hypotheses prompted by the teacher, "According to your investigation question, what do you think will happen?" Students discussed the steps of the procedures they would take, conducted the investigations, and took notes for their lab reports.
- A third grade teacher, conducted a lesson using the piloted program, *Academic Vocabulary Toolkit*, as scripted. Students answered questions about the targeted word, "discussion," such as which part of speech and give a synonym for this word. The teacher read the verbal practice prompt "After a long discussion, my family decided to visit \_\_\_ during summer vacation," then students echo- read the same. During the turn and talk, one student said, "Maybe a waterpark." Her partner responded, "I said that. Say another one." The first student replied, "But I agree with you." The teacher recorded shared answers from the class using a document camera.
- In a kindergarten class, students used counters and cubes to represent what they knew about numbers 11 to 19, then drew models to represent their numbers. Some students used the manipulatives but did not draw a model. Several students were asked to share how they modeled their numbers. A third grade teacher worked with about half of the class in the meeting area to re- teach finding equivalent fractions. During this part of the lesson the teacher used circle drawings and shaded in parts to represent equivalent fractions. Some students continued to struggle with misconceptions, evident by incorrect or inaccurate drawings that did not represent equivalent amounts, or writing incorrect numerators for examples such as  $1/4 = \_ / 8$ .

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions in ensuring curricula are aligned to Common Core and/ or content standards. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher- order skills across grades and subjects.

### Impact

All students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, have access to rigorous, coherent curricula which emphasize rigorous habits and higher- order thinking skills that promote college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders explained their instructional focus on in- depth teaching and practice of the writing process, as well as enhancing coherency across grades. A partnership with TC was implemented to strengthen teachers' capacity to teach writing and enrich narrative, informational and opinion genres to grade level. School leaders express that teachers now employ the writing workshop, separate from reading instruction, with structured units and clearer teaching points which are more aligned to student learning objectives. Additionally, TC reading units of study have been purchased to aid in growing the *Ready Gen* units toward greater depth with comprehension skills, guided reading and independent reading.
- School leaders chose to pilot the *Academic Vocabulary Toolkit* program in third and fourth grades at the recommendation of the district superintendent. As the student population consists of 49% current or former English Language Learners, (ELLs) school leaders state this curriculum, used for twenty minutes per day, is strengthening student knowledge of Tier 1 and Tier 2 high- use academic words, supporting students to speak and write more confidently, and provides additional opportunities toward development of good reading skills.
- A fifth grade writing unit plan poses an essential question, "What writing strategies do authors use to strengthen personal stories?" Given, "How can writing informative/ explanatory texts teach others about what we know?" as the essential question for a writing unit, a third grade student wrote, "All About Ants," for his final assessment task. Key student learning objectives from a fourth grade science unit state expectations for students to explain how adaptations help living things meet their needs and observe the behavior of a turtle. First graders learn why it is important to have rules and laws in a community and the causes and effects of a community changing over time, according to a social studies unit plan. Good mathematicians in kindergarten model and count with up to 9 objects, as well as solve problems using the draw a picture strategy.
- Lesson plans reflect teaching points such as, "Writers take charge of their writing and think about what is next in their realistic fiction." "Mathematicians make and interpret line plots with fractions to solve problems." "Good readers identify and explain the use of figurative language in the book, *Escape to Freedom*." "Scientist understand how climate can affect ecosystems."

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and ensure training is provided for all staff. Students are supported toward next levels by an established culture of learning that provides effective and focused guidance toward next levels.

### Impact

School leaders and staff are mutually responsible for attaining high expectations for themselves and students. All students, including high needs subgroups, own their educational experience and are prepared for success.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal, assistant principal, all classroom teachers across all grades, and teachers of intervention participated in a series of professional development sessions as partners with Teachers College and the Department of Education’s 100 Schools initiative. School leaders described learning to include how writing workshops are to be implemented and how TC books are used with teaching points in writing and noted improved pedagogy evident in the execution of writing workshops, communication of teaching points with students and quality of feedback to students. Additionally, a series of professional development workshops were turn keyed to paraprofessionals to support their understanding of the writing process and their abilities to apply cohesive strategies as they work with students.
- School leaders monitor growth in teacher effectiveness and report that currently 83% of all components of teacher observations fall within the categories of effective and highly effective. This percentage has increased from 69% last year and already exceeds this year’s school wide goal of 80%.
- The principal’s weekly newsletter, *The Friday Focus*, is another method used to communicate expectations to all staff. Staff Shout- outs are included in each issue, such as, “Great job creating a content- based Word Wall to support students’ Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary acquisition!” “Shout out for teaching her students to teach each other through engaging math group work!” “Nice, job holding second graders to high expectations through teaching them about mood in poetry!” Professional articles provide supports and examples to strengthen teacher practice on topics such as using more open- ended, thought - provoking questions and engaging students in collaborative groups through problem based learning.
- This year, school leaders have piloted departmentalization of the fifth grade for English Language Arts and math. Students say that it was hard at first because they had to remember to take the appropriate work and materials when they switched classes and get used to different teachers. Students across grades expressed enthusiasm for the school- wide College Appreciation Day, stating they learned what college was about and what they need to do to get into college from teachers across the school. A third grader shared that his work is getting harder because he is learning subjects he will have in middle school.
- School documents reflect guidance and support to fifth grade students and their families toward completion of the middle school application process, which include presentations by guest speakers, tips for navigating the middle school fair, monitoring student attendance at fairs, and follow up communications to ensure applications had been submitted.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

Teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry based professional collaboration that promotes achievement of school goals and distributive leadership structures are in place.

**Impact**

The work of collaborative teacher teams leads to progress toward the achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers have built their leadership capacity and have voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Minutes of the kindergarten/ first grade team reflect a kindergarten focus on narrative writing and first grade attention to opinion writing toward meeting the school goals. Discussions of teaching strategies that have worked to improve student writing were evident. Teachers state that the TC writing tools gave kindergarten students resources to use independently, which they now apply in other content areas beyond literacy. First grade teachers report that using the strategy: state topic/ one reason, has helped students to grow from writing two sentences to two paragraphs. Students in both grades have shown growth in the structure components of the TC rubric. During a third grade team meeting, teachers agreed to apply the use of a thesis statement- reasons- examples graphic organizer, suggested by the English as a New Language teacher, to strengthen students’ abilities to find and cite evidence from text to develop their opinion writing.
- A vertical team has been created to include three inquiry lead teachers who guide the work of their colleagues in bi- grade teams, as they analyze assessment data, align team goals to the school- wide goal, and identify targeted students. After initial on- demand assessments were scored, the inquiry leads supported analysis for areas of need, as teams identified rubric components in which students scored least. For grades two and three, the areas were elaboration and conventions, while for grades four and five, the needs were in development. Additionally, school documents indicate the inquiry leads collaborate once per month to present updates regarding the work of their teams, such as: The fourth/ fifth grade team created a binder collection of strong writing leads that demonstrate three strategies: ask a question, make a bold statement, use a quote. Second/ third grade team determined one hundred commonly used words would be explicitly taught and students must be expected and supported to spell them correctly in their writing.
- A math academic intervention teacher chairs the School Leadership Team and serves on the Measures of Student Learning Team, which in collaboration with the Curriculum Team, determined that the focus of professional development this year would be consistently focused on implementation of new initiatives: TC Partnership and The Leader in Me. Two teachers of English as a New Language were consulted in decisions to pilot the Academic Vocabulary Toolkit. Additionally, their expertise guides the development plan and execution of Title III funding. Members of the Response to Intervention Team have analyzed instructional programs which led to adoption of resources to support Tier II and Tier III interventions.