



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 177 The Marlboro

Elementary School K177

**346 Avenue P
Brooklyn
NY 11204**

Principal: Ann Marie Lettieri Baker

**Date of review: January 26, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Claudette Essor**

The School Context

P.S. 177 The Marlboro is an elementary school with 953 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 25% Asian, 1% Black, 33% Hispanic, and 39% White students. The student body includes 32% English Language Learners and 18% students with disabilities. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.8%.

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	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	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

School leaders and staff constantly communicate expectations for high levels of shared accountability for staff and student learning. All staff members communicate and partner with families to support all students in meeting college and career readiness expectations.

Impact

Ongoing communication of and support for high expectations for all staff foster mutual accountability for improving teaching and learning across the school. Strong partnerships among staff and families contribute to student progress in meeting high expectations for learning.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders set clear expectations and support all teachers towards success in meeting or exceeding the expectations, through school-based professional learning activities, intervisitations and offsite professional learning opportunities. The staff support team includes grade leaders, instructional leads, and Teachers College (TC) staff developers, all of whom collaborate with all teachers and school leaders to strengthen instructional practices schoolwide. Teachers receive extensive training in literacy as part of ongoing implementation of *Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project* (TCRWP) reading and writing curricula. A lab site on each grade level allows the TC staff developers to further support all teachers in learning about and sharing best practices. Teachers reported that they all turnkey learning to peers and work with each other in implementing the best practices across all content areas.
- Using observation data, school leaders support teachers in aligning their practice to targeted domains and components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Based on the data and teachers' self-selected professional goals, differentiated professional learning activities focus specifically on topics such as using assessment in instruction, questioning and discussion techniques and engaging students in learning. Observation reports show that school leaders support teachers in meeting expectations by providing feedback that addresses these elements of their practice. Teachers reported that, at times, the principal models instructional practices and facilitates collaborative viewing of videos to build their capacity to deliver high quality instruction to all students. Teachers stated that the principal constantly reminds them of school expectations through a staff handbook, weekly memos, emails and conversations at staff meetings.
- School leaders and staff partner in learning with families, through workshops on topics such as Common Core Learning Standards, assessments, web-based resources for learning at home, reading and homework strategies, English as a New Language (ENL) and the kindergarten transition process. Through newsletters with overviews of curriculum content and tasks, visits to classrooms on "First Fridays" and outreach activities on Tuesdays, families learn about high expectations for their children and strategies for helping their children meet the expectations. Families also receive progress reports that inform them about their children's progress in meeting expectations. Publishing parties, packets of learning activities and regular postings on the school's *Weebly* website further engage families in home-school partnerships to support children's learning. Families reported that they have contributed to funding for books and other school supplies and help with child care arrangements that allow more families to actively partner with school staff.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, students engage in discussions and complete challenging tasks. While teaching practices consistently reflect multiple entry points, the deepening of learning through extensions into curricula and tasks for diverse learners was not typically evident.

Impact

Consistent application of scaffolds and multiple entry points result in students being engaged in rigorous tasks and discussions across grades and content areas. However, instructional practices illustrate missed opportunities to extend learning for all students via tasks that elevate their thinking and promote ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- In several classrooms visited, teachers assigned Common Core-aligned tasks, with students citing evidence from texts to respond to questions and/or reporting on findings from inquiry based tasks. For example, in a grade 5 Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) class, groups of students engaged in analyzing claims, reasons and evidence, by looking at pictures with texts that advertised products such as different brands of cereal, skin care items and potato chips. The teacher used a graphic organizer to model how they should complete the task of identifying the claim being made about the product, reasons that support the claim and evidence presented for each reason. In a class with grade 4 students, the teacher asked students to review information from a prior lesson about the cause of the American Revolution, use the information to fill in a graphic organizer with evidence about “Taxation without Representation” and explain how that contributed to the Revolution.
- In the classrooms visited, teachers provided visual supports and scaffolds for students to be highly engaged in learning. Students were observed in small group activities, one-to-one conferencing with the teacher, or working together with a partner to respond to the task, prior to sharing with the whole class. In a grade 3 class, based on criteria outlined by the teacher verbally and via an interactive whiteboard, several groups of students used manipulatives such as base-ten blocks and wipe boards to show their work in solving differentiated one-and two-step multiplication word problems. Similarly, in a grade 2 science class about magnetism, students rotated across work stations, where they worked with a partner in using a magnet to test a group of objects (pennies, paper clips, keys, wood chips and metal screws) to determine which ones were attracted to the magnet. Most students finished the task quickly but had no additional task to extend their learning.
- In the classrooms visited, most teachers provided guiding questions which required students to think about concepts and skills taught and students routinely engaged in brief turn and talk sessions. However, there were limited opportunities for students to challenge each other’s thinking through more in-depth peer-to-peer questioning and student-led discussions during lessons. For example, although students in a grade 2 reading class read a picture book and engaged in a discussion about characters’ feelings, the discussion was limited to one word responses, such as “happy” and “sad”. A similar outcome was observed in a bridge class, where a comparison of the main character in each of two books resulted in a discussion that involved only a few students in a sequence of teacher-student questions and answers, with little opportunity for other students to add their voice to the conversation.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and teachers use student work and data to revise curricula and instruction, with targeted focus on further aligning units of study to Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts.

Impact

All students have access to curricula and tasks designed to engage them in learning activities that support college and career readiness goals and expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Units of study reflect alignment to Common Core Standards and instructional shifts and highlight topics, focus questions, essential understandings, embedded assessments, target vocabulary, and sample tasks for guided and independent practice. For math instruction, teachers use the Common Core-aligned *GO Math!* program, supplemented by units of study linked to the *Exemplars* math program and content and tasks from *EngageNY* resources, for additional focus on word problems and instructional shifts in math. *TCRWP* curricula add content for literacy-based tasks in interdisciplinary units of instruction across grades. New York State and City scope and sequence curricula guide instruction in social studies and science, with hands-on inquiry based tasks in science now being refined to deepen science instruction for upper grade students. Each unit includes a culminating task with Common Core-aligned rubrics and checklists for assessing student mastery of content.
- The school's curricula incorporate specific instructional materials and strategies for all learners, including ENL learners and students with disabilities. These include use of manipulatives, interactive white board activities and technology-based curriculum resources for skills building and other intervention activities. The *Wilson* reading program is used in grades 2 and 3 for at-risk students and unit plans show that teachers incorporate targeted vocabulary in creating learning tasks that support language acquisition for students at all levels. School curricula also include coverage of topics and skills linked to the ENL program and co-curricular activities such as art, music, drama, dance, chorus, band, and media arts.
- Teachers described ongoing revisions to curricula to address diverse student needs. In math, teachers noted that they are revising unit tasks for emerging and transitioning ENL students and students with disabilities, by introducing tiered vocabulary for improved access to multi-step word problems. They have also incorporated emphasis on the "Think Plan Solve" (TPS) strategy for solving word problems from the *Exemplars* math program. For literacy, teachers examined item analysis data from the 2015 New York State Common Core English Language Arts (ELA) exam and determined that a majority of students were not meeting standards related to skills such as main Idea and supporting details. In collaboration with the TC staff developers, teachers have modified reading and writing units to add visuals, including graphic organizers and videos, as part of re-teaching activities.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Analysis of student work and a variety of other student assessment data highlights student progress towards learning goals and informs adjustments to curricula and instruction.

Impact

Teachers and students have data with which to formulate action plans, including teacher interventions and curricula adjustments, designed to improve student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leader’s assessment binder indicates that teachers administer *TCRWP* reading and writing assessments, including on-demand performance tasks. Beginning and end-of-unit assessments in reading and writing and periodic assessments linked to *GO Math!* and *Exemplars* curricula provide additional data about levels of student achievement. The assessments are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards, helping teachers to determine which standards students have mastered and which ones need remediation. Teachers also assess student learning through individual and small group conferences and use the resulting data to evaluate student proficiency and content knowledge related to performance tasks across grades and core subjects.
- School leaders use a variety of documents, including spreadsheets with data for individual as well as subgroups of students, to show levels of achievement across assessments. The principal presented an “Independent Reading Level Progression Data” spreadsheet that outlined student strengths and areas of deficits across two assessments. Teachers described planned adjustments to curricula, such as revisions of content and teaching points based on analysis of tasks linked to assessments, including 2014-2015 New York State ELA assessment data showing questions and skills that most students struggled with. During the teacher team meetings, several teachers noted that based on data from end of unit assessments, they re-teach specific concepts to improve student mastery of targeted skills. School leaders and teachers also reported that they use data from the assessments to form guided reading groups, differentiate instruction and tasks and monitor student progress throughout the year.
- Classroom and hallway bulletin boards illustrate the use of Common Core-aligned rubrics to evaluate progress in student writing across grades. There are task specific rubrics attached to units of instruction to measure levels of skills and content acquisition across disciplines. Most of the work samples contained rubric-based feedback to students, via teacher comments with next steps for students to improve the work. Further, although some feedback seen on students’ work consisted of the teacher only circling portions of the rubric, with no explicit next steps for the student to build on the level of mastery attained, several of the students interviewed were able to clearly specify what they needed to do to improve their work based on the teacher feedback written on the work displayed. In commenting on teacher feedback on her informational essay about a special person, one student pointed to a rubric attached to her work and said, “As you can see, my teacher gave me a score of 3 out of 4 because I included reasons and evidence but that part of the paper that has the circle tells me that I need to have a good hook for my reader.”

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

Teams of teachers meet regularly to analyze student work and data to develop strategies for improving staff and student achievement. Teacher leaders collaborate with school leaders to provide input in decisions about teaching and learning across the school.

Impact

Through teamwork, teachers regularly reflect on their pedagogy and contribute to key decisions aimed at improving teacher capacity and student outcomes across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s schedule includes a daily common planning period for all teachers. Tasks during these meetings include developing strategies to improve students’ proficiency in responding to Common Core-aligned tasks across content areas. Records of teacher team meetings indicate that teachers examine item analysis data for New York State exams and unit assessments to determine individual student mastery of specific standards. The principal and teachers noted that teamwork continues to improve teacher pedagogy, as per Measures of Teacher Practice (MOTP) data and contributes to improvement in student achievement, as per data from *TCRWP* assessments administered to date.
- Observation of a grade 4 teacher team meeting showed participants engaged in analyzing student work from the most recent administration of running records. They first worked with a partner to share noticings about common strengths and deficiencies across the work of 5 students who scored in the bottom 1/3 of the standardized assessment continuum. Participants cited deficiencies such as missing letters at the end of words, incorrect tenses and difficulty in decoding vocabulary and then discussed implications for instruction of other students in the class and across the grade. They followed up by suggesting strategies for improving teaching and learning, including the formation of strategy groups for re-teaching and word work as part of a sequence of intervention steps. A presenter, timer and recorder facilitated the flow of conversations throughout the meeting.
- Teachers indicated that, with peers serving in roles such as grade leaders, instructional leads, special education liaison, and ENL providers, their voice is represented in decisions about school-wide protocols, curricula and instructional initiatives. The teacher leaders collaborate regularly with school leaders to help select instructional resources as well as design and implement professional learning activities. One teacher leader noted that peer leaders are responsible for leading staff in analyzing school data and using the information to identify and address school needs and learning goals. Further, teachers within teams have a designated leadership role, with rotations across cycles of weekly team activities. They take turns creating agendas, leading presentations at meetings and documenting team meeting activities, as part of feedback loops that keep school leaders and peers informed about team decisions and activities across the school.