



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 193 Gil Hodges

Elementary School K193

**2515 Avenue L
Brooklyn
NY 11210**

Principal: Tami Flynn

**Date of review: February 23, 2016
Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth**

The School Context

P.S. 193 Gil Hodges is an elementary school with 863 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 17% Asian, 47% Black, 14% Hispanic, and 18% White students. The student body includes 17% English Language Learners and 16% students with disabilities. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.7%.

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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	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	Focus	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Rigorous habits and higher order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects. Additionally, curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

The lowest- and highest- achieving students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities are able to demonstrate their thinking and have access to the curricula and tasks which are cognitively engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- A purposeful focus on the improvement of achievement among all students, especially the lowest third, has led to planning lessons with increased rigor and higher-order thinking skills. A review of planning documents revealed strategic task assignments and groupings of students at beginner, intermediate, and advanced groups. In a grade 1 gifted and talented class, students are grouped at stations addressing concrete, representational, abstract, and enrichment stations according to prior assessments and teacher observations. In a grade 2 general education class, students are grouped to either work with the teacher and complete notes for the third paragraph, work independently, or use additional resources such as a Lexile Level 770 book to gather notes if they are strong enough readers. All students are expected to share their learned facts with the class at the end of the lesson. A grade 5 lesson plan includes differentiating the class into five groups where some will receive a graphic organizer, a mini-chart guidance tool, or specific task cards to identify and analyze the change of a character over time.
- A grade 4 Expeditionary Learning task required students to write a single paragraph response to a specific question based on a reading passage about farmers in Colonial America. Teachers refined the assignment so students had to write an essay including a clear introduction and conclusion. A rubric was generated addressing seven writing Common Core Learning Standards. Additionally, graphic organizers were provided for students to generate their draft and final copy.
- Appropriately engaging assignment tasks for all students to demonstrate their thinking are designed in special education, general education, and gifted and talented classes. A review of curriculum planning documents for special education students to write about the “Amazing Bullfrog Adaptations” included a series of graphic organizers and pre-writing sheets. Several of the graphic organizers required the students to identify a topic with facts, record details regarding a topic sentence, include expository writing strategies with important details that support the main idea, or use structured guidance about how to develop each paragraph and include supportive information.
- Math unit plans have been revised to include increased time following an analysis of assessment results. Revisions to the grade 4 unit on fractions and mixed numbers include the addition of four grade 3 standards to support instruction of fractions and an increased depth of prior knowledge.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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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. Additionally, teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share.

Impact

Inquiry meetings strengthen and improve the instructional practices of teachers and help progress groups of students toward goals although not where they are coherently achieving increased mastery for all.

Supporting Evidence

- The inclusion of a 25th period for common planning time was established following teacher requests and offers teachers an opportunity to reflect on their “best practices and what we would not have seen on our own and learn about different learning styles and modalities...[It is also helpful]... to hear trends throughout the grade about student weaknesses.” Staff also shared inquiry meeting time affords them the chance to “modify curriculum,” “add more details,” “adjust pacing,” and “focus on certain areas more than others.” Even though the grade levels are provided time to horizontally plan and collaborate, it is not clear how inquiry meetings impact teacher practices and curriculum alignment leading to student achievement vertically and coherently throughout the instructional core.
- During an observation of an inquiry team, staff referenced several research-based articles and PowerPoints which provided information regarding best practices and strategies for targeting students who need improvement in writing. The teachers shared-out some of their findings from the articles, however critical review of the suggested practices did not appear to be discussed for their strengths and weaknesses for inclusion by all participants in the conversation. When one teacher read an article about “restating the question if done properly,” other teachers commented on students not understanding fully what a topic sentence and the parts of an essay are. Suggestions were to go further into the grade 4 curriculum and maybe even discuss with grade 3 teachers. At the conclusion of the meeting, next steps to impact instruction/pedagogical practices were written to use introduction PowerPoint(s) and plan more mini lessons to tackle areas of weakness. Next agenda items included discussing a math chapter, reading an article: “The Best Way for Students to Become Writers,” and making a list of books to help teach writing skills.
- A review of prior common planning grade level meeting agendas revealed focused objectives inclusive of pre- and post-assessment result analysis, data norming, and discussions of tasks for bulletin boards. Only a grade 3 agenda indicated trends in narrative writing would be discussed to target and create mini-lessons based on grade-wide trends. Strengths and weaknesses were noted and “it was determined that writing lessons will include editing and revising activities...” The next agenda meeting states that trends across the grade will continue to be identified and an action plan to address weaknesses will be developed, however, the inclusion of additional grades and or content areas are not referenced.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and instructional shifts. Additionally, teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practice discussions at the team and school level support instruction which has established appropriately engaging and challenging tasks which demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products for all learners including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Building leadership and staff shared classroom instruction includes significant opportunities for students to engage in peer discussions with partners, in small groups, or to the whole class; this was observed in all classes visited. During a grade 3 Socratic seminar discussion about bullfrog adaptations, the student facilitator asked questions to his peers. Students responded to each other offering additional evidence and sometimes challenged one another. One girl stated, "Before when [student] said it can use its croaking to scare a predator, it can also use its legs to come away from the predator." During a gifted and talented grade 1 class, students maintained class instruction through presenting their individual findings from various tasks in front of the class using the document camera. Presenters called on their peers to further explain information based on student questions. When one girl suggested the presenter "next time do a different one," the presenter questioned "how would that help my work?" Several grade 5 students stood up during a class discussion when sharing out their thoughts about differences between rich and poor people and cited text evidence from their book reading of *Esperanza Rising*. In all classes the teacher further challenged student's answers if their peers did not, such as asking "Can you make a connection to our character?"
- Students were presented with varied challenging tasks allowing them to demonstrate their thinking at various levels of understanding. In a grade 5 English Language Arts lesson, students were grouped in different expert groups with tools necessary to help them present their ideas to the class on large poster paper. Students had choices with the inclusion of content and were able to use additional resources to further their thinking. One boy stated to his group, "let us include these, they are influential factors that lead to her character traits." Students in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class were provided various graphic organizers based on their Developmental Reading Assessment results. Additionally, they were able to explain what they scored and how the graphic organizer was appropriate for them to write about the career choice of a Colonial American.
- Teachers consistently challenged their students to delve deeper into their understanding and sharing of critical understanding through questioning. During a grade 5 general education class, the teacher challenged a group of students to answer "What proof do they have that [the character] is more independent so far?" Students in a grade 2 class shared their thoughts about differences between New York City then and now.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Actionable feedback is provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Additionally, teachers make effective adjustments to meet the needs of all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers create and use rubrics in all classes and some students are able to articulate how they use them to improve their assignments. In a gifted and talented grade 1 class, a girl explained she uses her rubric if she wants to get a four she has to do the following, for example, "if I got a three in neatness, I would have to practice at home and do something more in the column four." A student with disabilities who was interviewed shared a rubric is "something that can keep you on track, if you earn a three it is good, but a four is expert." A review of student work showed many assignments and rubrics graded with comments and glows and grows. Teacher comments included suggestions such as: "remember to cite the textual evidence when it is used in your writing, continue to impress me with your strong use of voice and expression...be careful with past and present tense, and we will work on explaining your problem/solution so your solution is correct."
- Checks for understanding and feedback are regularly observed and provided with instruction from students themselves, their peers and the teacher. In a kindergarten class, students had to complete a checklist with their teacher regarding their ability to complete certain tasks such as use spaces well, use a period, and draw a picture. On another assignment they had to either write or draw facts about President Thomas Jefferson to represent what they understood. In a grade 4 class, students completed writing evaluation and peer editing forms where they provided written feedback to their partner about how "this piece of writing was...", "it makes me feel...", "the part I enjoyed the most was...", and "next time [you] might want to work on..." Several teachers were observed pausing instruction to redirect the task when students appeared confused or in need of clarification. During a self-contained lesson, the teacher asked students to give a thumbs up or down if they understood their assigned role. Although most students gave a thumbs up, she further asked for an explanation from several students and offered them an opportunity to explain the relevant vocabulary terms necessary for deep understanding.
- Some students are asked to create goals and identify steps they can take to achieve them. In grade 2, one girl wrote a goal for her "to be a good reader." She identified steps that would help her achieve her goal including, read a lot of books, write her own book, and learn to read harder books. Students shared the feedback they receive let them know what they are doing and have to improve. They further stated the feedback informs them how to do that.
- Students in a Socratic seminar self-assessed their peers for performance using a scaled rating of one to four. Additionally, they provided two goals for the next seminar and suggested an area where they would like help for themselves. Teachers also recorded participant performance information to provide immediate adjustments to the lesson, such as increase eye contact and/or explanation.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. Teacher teams and staff have established a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students and offer ongoing and detailed feedback.

Impact

A system of accountability has been established regarding high expectations for teachers by building leaders and by staff to support and prepare students for the next level in their education.

Supporting Evidence

- Script writing is used on formal writing assignments in several classrooms. Students shared they are encouraged to write in script so they “are better prepared for high school.” Not all students stated they are required to write script and several families expressed concern over the inconsistency of not needing to learn script writing in their child’s classroom.
- The building leadership in conjunction with staff departmentalized all classes in grade 5 and grade 4 gifted and talented. Students in grade 5 experience two core content teachers rather than one to “prepare them for middle school experiences”, according to teachers. Staff acknowledge they have also been able to focus more in-depth on their instructional strengths with the adjustment to their workload.
- Progress reports are created and provided to all students in content areas including specific reports generated for physical education and English as a second language. Progress reports identify student strengths and areas that need improvement for reading, writing, math, and social studies. Additionally, they provide comments related to study and work habits, homework, behavior, attendance, and effort. Parents expressed they appreciate the information the progress reports inform them of so they can see their child’s growth throughout the year.
- Professional development training is established early in the year with input from building leadership and staff. Presenters and staff members are identified including many of the sessions being taught by teachers themselves. A recent Professional Learning Community Development Plan lists professional development sessions, including some taught by teachers, in the following areas; discussion techniques, Universal by Design for learning, English Language Arts and math data, vertical planning, and New York State assessment common threads.
- Student council creates a monthly student edition newsletter called the Hodges Herald. The newsletter includes a focus on establishing an awareness of habits that support good pedagogy, such as being proactive. Student illustrations, cartoons, and written information support the habit referenced in the newsletter. Additionally, students contribute to the newsletter with staff interviews and articles of school related to events and happenings.