



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**P.S. 197-The Kings Highway Academy**

**Elementary School K197**

**1599 East 22 Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11210**

**Principal: Rosemarie Nicoletti**

**Date of review: May 25, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Audrey Madison**

## The School Context

P.S. 197-The Kings Highway Academy is an elementary school with 624 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 8% Asian, 12% Black, 17% Hispanic, and 60% White students. The student body includes 25% English Language Learners and 17% students with disabilities. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.0%.

## 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>Well Developed</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

Teachers use assessments and rubrics that are aligned to the school's curricula and consistently use ongoing checks for understanding and student self- and peer- assessment to make instructional adjustments.

### Impact

Actionable and meaningful feedback regarding student achievement is provided. Teachers make effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use pre- and post-assessments to plan small groups. For example, a second grade pre-assessment task for persuasive writing requires students to write an opinion piece. A second grade lesson plan reflects grouping based on the pre- assessment and teacher observations. The goal, for some groups of students, is focused on introductions, conclusions, and organizing scattered information. Other students, who included these components in the pre- assessment, work to elaborate each section of their essay, concentrating on reasons to support opinions and connecting detailed examples to reasons. Students explained that based on assessment questions in class, they often get to choose which groups to work in, based on the need for intervention, to work on-level, with a partner or in an enrichment group.
- A classroom chart for reading goals reflects third graders determining their strengths and needs in their character studies through mysteries. For instance, with his name on a blue post- it, one student indicated he was doing well with inferring about characters and using character traits, while his pink post- it denoted his goal for noticing how a character changes across the story. One fifth grader explained that they take assessments for each new reading unit and get feedback from the teacher. Then they use learning progressions, which are descriptive grade appropriate guides from Teacher's College, to set goals. Another fifth grade student indicates her new goal to compare and contrast story elements and themes on her narrative reading learning progression.
- In a third through fifth grade class for students with disabilities, the teacher and two paraprofessionals each wrote conference notes for the students they supported. Two quick check examples in the math textbooks were marked correct or incorrect for each student in each group. Comments indicate student understandings and areas to work on. For instance, one fifth grader, "had some difficulty dividing by powers of 10 when it involves decimals but understands strategies to convert metric measures." Conference notes of a fourth grade teacher show revised teaching points based on students' difficulties.
- Written teacher feedback based on a fourth grade information writing rubric provides detailed comments on each criteria and further informs, "Each chapter contained a different form of information and was written in a different style. Next time use sub-headings to organize the information in your chapters." A third grade student explained that her teacher's feedback meant she needed to use descriptions of characters and the setting to improve her work.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and teaching strategies provide consistent instructional supports. However, entry points are not utilized strategically.

### Impact

Teachers accurately understand their students and all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills. Yet, there are missed opportunities to implement high quality strategies and scaffolds to enhance student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulate the expectation that facilitation of student learning, “will give students opportunities to engage with materials and resources independently and with peers, self- assess and monitor their own progress, and set goals.” The instructional focus: “Teacher planning will provide support for independent practice through instructional supports and targeted feedback with gradual release of scaffolds in order to increase responsibility and ownership of learning for every child.”
- In a fifth grade Integrated Co-Teaching class, teachers provided multi-leveled *Exemplar* tasks. One teacher facilitated a group, asking clarifying questions as students worked to apply a formula to solve their task involving rate, distance and time. The co-teacher circulated among pairs of students and posed guiding questions. Three entering English Language Learners utilized individual laptops to engage in an *Imagine Learning* interactive math program. In a fourth grade class, the teacher facilitated a group of students who required re-teaching, based on quick-check assessment questions or students’ request for additional help. The teacher reminded students to use their measurement charts to support comparing customary weights. Students who had completed their independent work then completed enrichment worksheets from the designated folder. Two students had finished their enrichment sheets, then created several of their own problems and solved each other’s problems, yet were still finished before the end of the math period. A group of third grade students used unit square grid paper to calculate area. Fifth graders used a metric units chart to convert measurements but two students out of five had difficulty applying the powers of 10 to their solutions. Across math lessons, ready access to additional math tools or manipulatives for students to deepen conceptual understanding or utilize as needed, were not evident.
- Third grade students explored elements of mysteries in their leveled reading books, with some students advancing to reading a series of books. The teacher guided understanding of how to revise theories about possible suspects as she projected her book on a document reader, read aloud and modeled her thinking. She then identified two characters and directed students to turn and talk to discuss, “What role do you think they might have in the story?” The teacher reminded students to refer to their detective’s dictionary to support their discussions. Graphic organizers help students keep track of clues, suspects as well as their thoughts and reasons found in textual evidence. In a first grade class, students shared the books they had written about the Solar System with their partners. One student was beginning to write her book and asked for help to spell Earth as she did not have ready access to books or a word list she could refer to.

## Additional Findings

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

School leaders and faculty strategically integrate the instructional shifts and ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, while emphasizing higher-order skills coherently across grades and subjects.

### Impact

There is coherence in curricula so that all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, demonstrate their thinking in tasks that promote college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders decided to continue participation in *Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project* (TCRWP) utilizing previous units and incorporating new, updated units as well. The principal states that ongoing staff development combined with familiarity of the curriculum have strengthened teachers' abilities to identify the most important teaching points and define the literacy units to meet the needs of their students. School leaders state that teachers and students make use of tools such as TCRWP learning progressions, and methods, such as stop and jot thoughts on post-its, to make thinking about reading and writing more visible. *New York Ready* test prep books were purchased to increase students experience with grade appropriate texts and questions since students are reading leveled texts during reading workshop. The *GO Math!* program is supplemented with the use of *Exemplars*, an online math program with higher order differentiated tasks, and multi-step problems from *EngageNY*. With an increasing number of newcomers from various countries, school leaders recently purchased an on line visual program, *Imagine Learning*, to enhance and enrich language for entering and emerging English Language Learners.
- A first grade writing unit plan for nonfiction chapter books includes the teaching point, "Good writers work with their partners to help each other add or subtract information in order to make their nonfiction books even better." A first grade lesson plan identifies an aligned skill, "Writing partners can help lift the level of our teaching books," and this strategy, "Partners can give compliments and suggestions using a checklist." An essential question for fifth grade social studies poses, "How have geography, economics, people and key events shaped Latin America?" Students collaborate to conduct research and use an online slide-sharing program to create a travel brochure for their chosen Latin American countries.
- As students solve *Exemplar* tasks they are consistently asked to show their mathematical thinking. A third grade task requires students to determine "Who is using correct thinking to find the area of the box top?" A fifth grade task on volume poses, "Who is correct? What is the volume of both of the displays placed next to each other? A differentiated *Exemplar* task is planned for a fifth grade Integrated Co-Teaching class. One task involves determining, "Who will get to Hershey Park first, Bus A or Bus B? How many minutes sooner will they arrive?" Another task provides additional information to the scenario and asks, "Which group will be on an actual ride first? How many minutes sooner will they be riding than the other group?"

<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, ensure training is provided for all staff, and effectively collaborate with families to support their children’s progress.

### Impact

A culture of mutual accountability has been established and the school successfully partners with families to further enhance academic achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct initial planning conferences with teachers during which time, teachers generate goals for their growth based on the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. School leaders refer to these goals during observations and provide feedback regarding progress. Additionally, with a focus on building teachers’ ability to use data more effectively to drive instruction, for all observations teachers are required to submit data which provides a rationale for small group work. Expectations for curriculum and instruction are explained in detail in the faculty handbook. School documents reflect that morning announcements are used to communicate events for the day or week, such as learning walks focused on teaching charts, use of assessments, small group instruction and student independence.
- Teachers shared that they requested more professional development in mathematics this year. As a result, school leaders employed consultants from *Metamorphosis Teaching Learning Communities*. Consultant logs reflect support with unit and lesson design. For instance, training for the second grade team focused on their data unit, making adjustments to an end of unit task that would allow students to generate their own data questions, collect data, create bar graphs and interpret graphs. Third grade teachers were coached to create a more challenging *Go Math!* problem by removing the words: area and perimeter, requiring students to make sense of the problem rather than compute using a known formula. Documentation of a Teacher’s College staff developer reveal a focus on small group work including gradual release of scaffolds, assessments within small group work, and areas of student improvement such as students showing mastery of tasks, self- assessing their skills, and setting higher goals.
- Interviewed parents convey a strong sense of collaboration with teachers. One parent explained that in response to her weekend message, her child’s teacher scanned and sent a study guide via email. Another parent stated that the teacher sent spelling words via text. Parents are invited into classrooms regularly and have attended events such as class publishing parties where kindergarten students shared their “All About” books. A parent of a third grader attended a class for parents focused on the state exams. Parents were taught to solve math problems in different ways, and changes in the reading tests were explained. Parents were provided with internet links to access practice examples to support their children at home. Parents affirm that they receive progress reports which indicate current independent performance in reading, writing and math and expectations to be met for grade level performance. Teachers also regularly inform parents about progress and concerns through texts, emails and notes so that families are “notified every step of the way.”

<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 collaborations that promotes the achievement of school goals. Distributive leadership structures are in place.

**Impact**

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

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers collaborate in grade teams to plan and implement curricula and ensure alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards. School documents reveal collective work to create a menu of possible teaching points for literacy units of study. First grade writing units reflect teaching points within three major areas of focus to guide students to write nonfiction chapter books. Each teacher selects the teaching points which are most appropriate to meet their students’ needs and abilities, as evidenced in revised unit plans of fourth grade teachers. One teacher has combined some points, another teacher has rearranged the teaching order for some points, while a third teacher indicates areas for re-teaching, in some cases with new articles.
- Teachers who have been identified by school leaders as experts in core subjects also work in vertical teams focused on content areas. For instance, the math team works in partnership across grades to clarify the math standards that are assessed within *Exemplar* tasks. The team has created task specific student friendly indicators used for self-assessment and to highlight specific areas in need of improvement.
- School leaders have initiated a professional learning team comprised of teachers across grades and subjects, including teachers of English Language Learners, students with disabilities and academic intervention. This group of teachers surveyed the staff and set up a menu of professional learning options in interactive white board training, *Exemplars*, English as a New Language Make-and-Take and Behavior Management, offered over several weeks. In some cases, other teachers volunteered to facilitate workshops. Additional study groups have been formed as well. Teachers expressed they receive training in areas they needed and believed to be important. They also state their needs have been considered as school leaders discuss agendas with hired consultants.