



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 244 Richard R. Green

Elementary School K244

**5404 Tilden Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Deon Edwards

**Date of review: January 13, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Anne Alfonso**

The School Context

P.S. 244 Richard R. Green is an elementary school with 613 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 0% Asian, 96% Black, 2% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 2% English Language Learners and 21% students with disabilities. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 92.1%.

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	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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The school provides ongoing information to families regarding student progress towards college and career readiness.

Impact

Ongoing communication and support has increased teachers' understanding and awareness of the school leader's expectations around teaching and learning. The school's communication with families provides opportunities and the support necessary for them to understand student progress towards meeting those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leader communicates high expectations to the entire staff through the school's administrative handbook. At the beginning of each school year it is distributed and reviewed. As evidenced in the PS 244 Instructional Focus, a detailed outline of the daily instructional program, as well as the expectations for the classroom environment, supports the new initiatives being implemented which include reading response journals and daily math journals for all students. Additionally, detailed instructional communication to the staff regarding independent reading time, student work products, higher-order questions, student discussion, and the components of both unit and lesson plans are provided to all members of the school community. The Danielson *Framework for Teaching* guides instruction. The goals this year address components that focus on questioning and discussion as well as writing across subject areas. The goals were developed using the analysis of school wide data in concert with staff input and accountability.
- Through frequent classroom visits, the teachers receive immediate feedback regarding their practice. A review of the feedback indicates a focus on the school's priorities with specific next steps of support in the area of questioning using the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) protocol, explicit instruction in the writing process, and formative assessment tools. Instructional memos, as well as glows and grows based on a brief informal observation of practice, communicate high expectations for all teachers. Teachers participate in professional learning opportunities as noted on the professional development plan and calendar and share their expertise and learning with colleagues in professional development meetings. Teachers participate in instructional rounds focused on an identified problem of practice.
- In an effort to keep families informed of their child's progress, the school provides families with progress reports twice a year, detailing progress in meeting the standards for literacy and math addressed for that marking period. Parents receive the Parent Handbook, as well as, a monthly grade newsletter highlighting what students are learning. Parents attend a Meet the Teacher Night to learn the expectations of the grade for their children. Parents are connected as partners through online resources such as RAZkids and Imagine Learning. Workshops are offered for parents to assist in their children's learning and progress. A workshop focusing on the understanding of the *Fountas and Pinnell* assessment outcomes was offered to parents and was well attended. Since 2013, a series of workshops focusing on the Common Core Learning Standards has been crafted to provide information, resources, and specific strategies to extend learning at home. Parents attend Tuesday afternoon sessions with teachers as well as "homework help" workshops for math and other content areas. Parents participate as class parents volunteering 2 days a week in classrooms. They have expressed appreciation of the school's open door policy and the Tuesday afternoons to meet and communicate with teachers.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teaching practices are aligned to a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Across classrooms, the quality of student discussion and work products is consistent.

Impact

Students are consistently engaged in high levels of thinking and participation resulting in their demonstrating higher-order thinking in their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's instructional focus on the use of higher order thinking questions to promote critical thinking and student discussions is embedded in pedagogy across classrooms. The common beliefs of teaching and learning is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teachers were observed during one of the workshop model components by either providing a mini lesson, working with students in guided practice, or having students work on tasks to demonstrate their understanding. For example, in a fourth grade classroom several groups of students were engaged in student-centered discussions using accountable talk stems to support their thinking. The discussion was centered on questions requiring a comparison of the authors' ideas and on the student's discussing whether fresh water is more precious than gold? Both questions prompted a text-based discussion. Students used evidence from the text about water and fresh water to support their reasons. Another group of students were discussing the main idea from two sources to synthesize ideas from science-based articles. The teacher provided feedback and reminded them to use text based evidence and the new vocabulary. In a grade 3 class, based on the text *Living through a Natural Disaster*, students were engaged in a team talk discussion on whether the government did enough to warn the people of Darwin, Australia about the Cyclone. Students had opportunities to turn and talk and to question each other regarding why there are storm chasers? The teacher provided feedback about their questions. Across classrooms, although students are actively engaged in discussions, they rely on their teachers for directions.
- Across the grades classrooms are student-centered. For example students in a grade 5 ICT class students responded to an essential question focused on how a narrator shapes the way events are described in a story? Students participated in a debate and enacted out the roles of the third little pig and the big bad wolf. The discussion centered on why they thought the pig could have been gone before the wolf arrived and evidence from the lawyers to question Alexander T. Wolf. The students then participated in a mock trial volunteering for the roles of judge, jurors, defendant, and lawyers. The mock trial continued with students asking clarifying questions and taking notes on how a lawyer defends the client. In a grade 2 writing class, students actively researched and took notes on the family life of the animal that they had chosen to learn about. Students researched their topic, discussed the title and the chapter with their partner, and reflected on how this research was different than what they had done before. The students asked clarifying questions and assessed the process. Student conversation included the inclusion of accountable talk stems such as I agree; I disagree.
- Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflected high levels of thinking and participation. Students in a kindergarten Nest Class actively participated in solving addition word problems and recording their equation. Students identified the strategy to solve the problem and how to count up. Students were to write a story with their partner and select the part they wanted to play. In a fourth grade class students spoke about the use of peer assessments in their rubrics.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school effectively aligns its curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and ensures the incorporation of the instructional shifts. Teachers utilize student work and data to plan and refine curricular and academic tasks.

Impact

Curricular decisions have allowed for coherence across the grades and a focus on college and career readiness skills. The planning and refinement of units and academic tasks based on students' specific needs has provided all learners access to the curriculum.

Supporting Evidence

- Unit plans and teachers' lesson plans are aligned to the Common Core Standards and include essential questions, assessments, scaffolds, and differentiated tasks based on students' needs. Across all content areas and grades, teachers' plans reflect the components of the workshop model where the mini lesson, guided practice and independent or group tasks guide student thinking and interaction. All plans reflect exposure to the instructional shifts such as text-based answers and deep understanding of problem solving in math. For example, a fifth grade ICT class utilized a debate format to argue the point of view of the characters, and a mock trial format to engage and support most students' point of view and argument.
- Within grade and vertical teams, teachers are using the results from their analysis of state assessments, baseline assessments, unit assessments, and performance tasks to make modifications and revisions to the curricula and performance tasks. For example, based on the item analysis, the teachers recommended that *Ready Instructional Guides* and the online toolbox be added to the curriculum to introduce standards and supplement the *ReadyGen* program. In addition, *Imagine Learning*, an online literacy program provides individual entry points for students and provides specific support for students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), and those students who are at risk.
- The school has adjusted the curriculum to include a separate writing component. Writing instruction is being developed through the use of instructional resources that include the *Writing Performance Assessment*, and other supplementary materials. Teachers are supported through professional study, and teacher-led workshops. In addition, the *Language Power* program and all the components have been purchased for ELLs to provide access to language development and promote accelerated learning.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies aligned to the school's curricula. Common assessments are used to track student progress towards goals across grades and subjects.

Impact

The tracking of student data allows for actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement and instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school administers common assessments including the *Fountas and Pinnell Running Records* and the *NYC Writing Performance* to assess students' reading and writing skills. These assessments administered three times a year are used as the key benchmarks in measuring student progress towards meeting their goals. All data is submitted by teachers in Google Docs and is reviewed by the teachers to monitor progress and adjust their curriculum and instruction. For example, the Grade 3 teachers adjusted the grade's writing instruction which had a focus on detailed writing traits. Grade wide unit and chapter assessments in math and reading are administered and analyzed for progress and next steps. For example, teachers of students with disabilities use the ORID protocol to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the division concepts exhibited on the assessment. The protocol is focused conversation around data analysis. Teachers are objective, reflective, interpretive and decisional in the process. They determined that next steps would include the importance of highlighting words in the problem, review of the division fact family, as well as the process of elimination.
- Teachers provide feedback to students through conversations, reading and writing conferences, and in writing through rubrics. Feedback is evident within portfolios and on classroom and hallway bulletin boards. Rubrics provide students with actionable steps and push students to the next level on their writing pieces. Students also receive feedback in their writing journals based on a short-response rubric, as well as feedback from peers during the writing process.
- The school uses various assessments such as the *Common Core-aligned Ready Practice Exams* as school wide baseline assessments in reading and math at the beginning of the school year for grades K-5. *Apperson Data* a web link is also utilized for an analysis of results and next steps for instruction. The instructional team has adjusted the curriculum to include skill-based introductory lessons from the *Ready Instructional Guide and Toolbox* to support pacing and alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers and administrators utilize key standards for instruction and for ongoing professional learning with a focus on questioning in mathematics.

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

Teacher teams are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaboration to analyze student work and data and to share best practices.

Impact

Teacher collaboration has resulted in shared leadership with a focus on improved student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- During an observation of a grade 4 teacher team meeting, teachers were reporting on the use of intervention strategies for problem solving. It was discussed that although many students had difficulty with the questions, when modified, nearly half the class was able to complete the question. It was also discussed that students did not go back to answer the question in many cases. The meeting continued with the development of an inquiry task for journal writing and student work. The teachers viewed the work, categorized the data, and provided warm and cool feedback to what students did well and what they needed to improve upon. The teachers noted that the standard being studied centered on vocabulary, and that many responses referring to vocabulary were incorrect. Further analysis revealed that students defined the word “toil” and attempted to answer with one detail; however students did not restate the question nor did they define the word correctly. Teachers then shared strategies and possible tools they would create to support student learning. Previewing questions first; underlining unknown words; analyzing vocabulary questions and words related to the class discussions for the week.
- The instructional team is a vertical team with teacher representatives from each grade to promote collaborative decision making around the school’s instructional goals. The instructional team is comprised of teachers and administrators meeting biweekly to determine instructional programs and assessments. The leadership together with the teachers analyzed the assessment data for math and writing. The representatives communicated the expectations to grade teams and the teams created the sequence and the pacing calendar for math for all the grades. These documents were then put in Google Docs. Additionally, writing instruction has been strengthened through the *Writing Performance Assessment*, the use of text-based evidence, and the use of mnemonics. Teacher leadership has been increased by a teacher identified on each grade to lead the work using Apperson Datalink to further the data-base instruction, as well teachers turn keying professional information using the protocol, Give One Take One. In addition, teachers participate in teacher Instructional Rounds teachers facilitated by the UFT Teacher Center coach.
- Throughout the school, teachers meet vertically with the cluster teachers and service providers to share best practices for all students. Teachers analyze student data work to see trends and best practices. Through an analysis of the MOSL, grade 3 teachers determined three traits for writing which needed improvement. The writing strategy R.A.C.E. (Restate, Answer, Cite, Explain) was then implemented and evidence of growth in student performance was tracked and documented. In addition, teachers of students with disabilities met across grades to discuss instructional strengths and the challenges they have to support all their student’s instruction. . They created reading bundles one level lower to assess and determine if students understand both the questions and the skills. Based on vertical meetings and student data, the *Foundations* program was added to augment phonics and the development of early literacy for the lower grades.