



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 328 Phyllis Wheatley

Elementary School K328

**330 Alabama Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Barbra Gedacht

**Date of review: March 17, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley**

The School Context

P.S. 328 Phyllis Wheatley is an elementary school with 301 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 57% Black, 37% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 18% English Language Learners and 23% students with disabilities. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 87.9%.

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	Developing
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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments aligned with the school's curricula to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact

Assessment data is used by teachers to adjust curricula, and it enables them to provide actionable feedback to students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers administer a Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) to all students from kindergarten through grade 5 in September, December, March, and June. The Scantron math performance assessment is administered in September, December, March, and June, to student in grades 3 through 5, and teachers administer *Go Math!* unit assessments to all students from kindergarten through grade 5. Students from kindergarten through grade 5 also complete New York City Performance Tasks in English Language Arts (ELA) and math at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Teachers create writing tasks that are aligned to the Teachers College Writing Program units of study to assess student learning in science and social studies. Teachers use results from these assessments to determine student progress in each content area. Teachers monitor comprehension of content as well as skill attainment using item skills analysis and looking at student work. A review of student SRI and Scantron data demonstrates that students have made progress in reading fluency and math scale scores across grades.
- Across student work samples reviewed, teachers provide students with feedback on their performance and offer next steps for improvement. Teacher feedback on a science opinion task states, "Your essay states your opinion very clearly. You gave good examples of its uses. You could have identified one specific type of igneous rock." Feedback on an ELA piece states, "I love how you gave an explanation after each detail. Keep up the hard work. Be sure your concluding statement connects back to the topic." The majority of students interviewed stated that they receive feedback on their work most of the time and were able to clearly articulate their strengths and next steps in learning based on the feedback. One student stated, "I have improved a lot in writing. Racism was a hard topic but my conclusion left my reader with something to think about. Next time, I have to correct my spelling and punctuation."
- Based on assessment data, teachers adjust lesson plans, which include re-teaching, flexible grouping for targeted instruction, and the addition of scaffolds or supports. An ELA lesson includes a note to refer back to the previous day's extended response prompt because students "struggled with stating answers, introducing evidence and linking back to their answer." This lesson included adjustments to pull identified students to work in a small group with the teacher to "read and find relevant evidence." The lesson also states that students will then redo the task with a new prompt.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices and student work products are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best.

Impact

A lack of strategic use of effective teaching practices results in missed opportunities for high-level work products and student discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulated a set of core beliefs around how students learn best that include a shift from teacher-focused to student-centered learning, small group instruction, group work and discussions, hands-on learning, and the integration of technology. In some of the classrooms observed, teachers have begun to organize students into small groups for instruction, discussion, and group work. However, some of the lessons observed were still teacher directed. In a grade 1 classroom, the lesson remained teacher-led for the duration of the lesson. In a grade 5 classroom, students moved to small groups for discussions and had the opportunity to share their groups' thinking with the class.
- To support the school leader's beliefs on the use of technology, teachers have begun to integrate technology into their daily instruction. SMARTboards are used to project lesson objectives, model tasks for guided practice, and share supplemental information from the Web. Some teachers also use document cameras to display authentic student work, highlight the understandings, and clarify misconceptions, so students are guided via visual representations of strategic next steps in completing their work. In a grade 5 classroom, the teacher used the SMARTboard to display and discuss a self-assessment rubric. In a social studies class, the teacher used the document camera to model the use of a research-planning sheet. While most teachers have integrated technology into their practice, it was only used as an interactive tool for students in some of the classrooms visited. In two classrooms observed, students used laptops to access information on American Civil War battles. In a grade 1 classroom, students used the SMARTboard to draw hour hands on analog clocks during guided practice. In other classrooms, student use of technology was not evident.
- In an ELA classroom, students worked in small groups to compare and contrast points of view in a variety of texts. Students led the discussions in each group and responded to classmates. One student asked, "Why do you think this person wrote this document?" A group member responded, "She wanted her dad to return home because she and her brother were sick and her dad was in the army." This level of thinking and participation in these discussions were not present in some other classrooms. In one social studies classroom, students conducted group research on the key players, main events, and vocabulary associated with the Civil War. Students discussed their findings and rated their classmates' research. In another social studies class, the teacher paired students to plan and conduct research on the Civil War, however, students went directly to their individual computer screens, did not use the distributed planning sheet, or engage students in relevant high-level discussions to enhance the process.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula aligns to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Purposeful decisions around curricula build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty utilize the *ReadyGen* reading program for ELA, the Teachers College Writing Program for writing, *Go Math!* for math, and the New York City Scope and Sequence for science and social studies. All curricula align to the Common Core Learning Standards and teachers are currently working with specialists from Teachers College and the National Teachers Network (NTN) to create curriculum maps and refine pacing calendars. School leaders incorporated the instructional shifts by identifying a focus on balancing informational and literary texts, emphasizing academic vocabulary, and increasing student access to complex texts.
- Across grades and subjects, unit plans include content specific and transferable vocabulary words, as well as supplemental informational and literary texts. A grade 4 narrative-nonfiction unit plan includes the following vocabulary words: prey, predator, excavated, examines, stealthily, and vibrations. This lesson also includes a variety of recommended texts including *The Tarantula Scientist* and *The Boy Who Drew Birds: A Story of John James Audubon*.
- Teachers are currently revising curriculum maps across content areas based on analysis of student data. Revisions include differentiated tasks and planning for teaching small instructional groups. Revised grade 4 unit maps include plans to “modify tasks to achieve the same reading and /or writing goals. Students will work on the same task with different points of entry.” A revised kindergarten unit plan includes plans to differentiate and support small groups using online ELA support, alphabet bingo, and rhyming cards.
- A review of formative and summative student data led to adjustments to instruction for English Language Learners and students with disabilities, teacher support for small groups, the use of scaffolded graphic organizers, educational videos, and supplemental online support programs such as Achieve 3000, Imagine Learning, IXL math, Raz-Kids, Reading A-Z, MyON, and SmartyAnts. A grade 2 math lesson includes plans for three targeted groups with differing levels of support. According to the plan group one would work independently, group two would receive some assistance with questions only, and group three would have the story read to them and receive teacher support in underlining details and responding to questions.

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 professional learning to support them. School leaders and staff provide ongoing feedback to families.

Impact

Systems and supports are in place to hold staff accountable for meeting expectations and to help families and students understand student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate expectations during faculty conferences, Monday professional learning periods, vertical team meetings, one-on-one conferences, and common preparatory periods, as needed. School leaders provide feedback to teachers after formal and informal observations using teacher feedback sheets aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The school leader has also hired coaches and literacy and math consultants to provide ongoing training to support teachers in meeting expectations. Coaches and consultants are supporting staff in the creation of Common Core-aligned curriculum maps in ELA, math, science and social studies. The school professional development calendar includes days for updating curriculum maps with consultant support which show evidence of revisions to pacing, resources, and differentiation of tools and tasks.
- School leaders review all teacher created performance tasks and student performance on the tasks for each class. Leaders provide written feedback to teachers on performance task data with next steps for instructional improvement after each administration. Leader feedback on a grade 1 task states, “Your students kept it very simple and their illustrations are very simplistic, do not have much detail or labels. They were able to describe the steps. Let’s push them to write more and encourage them to complete more detailed drawings.”
- Parents interviewed shared that communication has improved a lot this year. They shared that there are more staff available to communicate with families. Teachers and staff communicate via face-to-face meetings, backpacked letters, and distribution of flyers that are also available in the main office and at the front desk. Parents shared that they take advantage of parent engagement Tuesdays during which time they can sit in on classes and participate in the lessons. One parent shared that she cannot visit on Tuesdays and the principal has extended the invitation to her and other parents to schedule visits on other days as needed.
- Parents receive information regarding their children’s progress via progress reports distributed in between the scheduled report cards. Progress reports include current New York State performance levels, as well as levels on SRI, *Fountas and Pinnell*, *Go Math!* unit assessments, and Scantron. Reports also include expected Lexile and *Fountas and Pinnell* performance levels by grade. Parents noted that teachers share information regarding the Common Core Learning Standards during parent engagement Tuesdays. One parent added that teachers also provide support materials that can be used at home, such as manipulatives to support her child in math. The school leader and coaches also held workshops for parents to discuss the New York State assessments in math and ELA. Several of the parents interviewed attended the workshops and indicated they were informative.

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. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share.

Impact

Collaboration has strengthened teacher practice and resulted in progress for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers on every grade meet weekly during a double common preparatory period to analyze data and look at student work. Teachers also meet on vertical teams on assigned Mondays for inquiry. The observed grade 5 meeting followed an established agenda and utilized the Data Wise inquiry protocol to analyze student work. The agenda includes a check-in, topics for the day, plan for the next meeting, and a review of the next steps. Reviewed agendas, from multiple grade levels, show evidence that all teams follow similar structures.
- The grade 5 agenda included a focus on student performance on short response questions. The team determined that students struggled with the short response sections of the 2015 ELA exam and were still struggling based on the March formative assessments. This realization framed the subsequent discussion and analysis of individual student work. During the grade team meeting, the presenter posed an essential question to the group. “What misconceptions or misunderstandings did this student have? Was it the passage or the student? What implications does this have on instruction?” Teachers reviewed the student work and shared possible student misconceptions. One teacher noted that the student did not seem to understand the meaning of the word, “confident,” as used in the prompt question. Teachers also shared possible next steps for this student and for adjusting instruction across the grade. Teachers agreed to review vocabulary words with students and emphasize annotation of the prompt questions to be sure students answer questions completely.
- Teachers interviewed shared that working on teams has improved their practice and made them stronger as a team. One teacher shared that they have always looked at student work but the use of the Data Wise protocol has given teachers the lens to look at work critically and identify next steps for students across the grade. One teacher noted that working with her colleagues has allowed her to see the learning steps “in between skills.” Her colleagues have helped her to slow down and identify the gaps in learning that prevent students from learning new skills. Teachers also shared that students have shown improvement based on strategies discussed at the team level and implemented in the classroom. Teachers shared that students have demonstrated growth in ELA and math. The percentage of students at Level 3 or 4 on the New York State assessments has improved from 3% to 5% in ELA and from 4% to 15% in math from school year 2014 to 2015.