



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 004 Duke Ellington

Elementary School M004

**500 West 160th Street
Manhattan
NY 10032**

Principal: Adam Stevens

**Date of review: October 27, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich**

The School Context

P.S. 004 Duke Ellington is an elementary school with 660 students from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 1% Asian, 8% Black, 91% Hispanic, and 0% White students. The student body includes 40% English Language Learners and 18% 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 91.5%.

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 Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Additional Findings	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	Focus	Developing
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	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback.

Impact

School leaders provide training and have a system of accountability for those high expectations. Ongoing feedback is given to help families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The administration provides staff with several iterations of high expectations through a staff handbook, memos, bulletins, feedback from classroom observations, and debrief sessions. Additionally, administration provided a first day orientation, outlining for staff expectations related to such areas as lesson planning, implementation of the workshop model with experience charts, use of the Danielson *Framework for Learning* and the *Framework for Great Schools*.
- To set teacher goals, administrators and teachers discuss high expectations during the initial individual planning conferences. Observations are followed by meetings to provide specific feedback for implementation in the classroom and looked for during follow-up observations. Expectations are shared by teacher leaders at the weekly grade and departmental meetings. Inter-visitations among teacher teams are scheduled. Administrators attend teacher team meetings aligned to their areas of responsibility. The cycle of feedback is evident in several samples of observations reviewed. The administration provided staff actionable feedback based on these expected practices. The administration is focused on differentiated instruction with challenging tasks and for teachers to work with the students' proximal zone of learning to assure the realization of the school's goal that every student will make more than a year's growth during the school year.
- The professional development plan provides staff with the necessary support to achieve the high expectations that have been set. Some of the professional development is planned and implemented by the staff for the staff. For example, a teacher presented a session on Google Expeditions, while lead teachers conduct grade and professional planning team meetings.
- Teachers reach out to parents weekly to communicate student progress and areas of needed support. Parents shared being pleased with the consistent communication they receive from the school especially that it is in their home language. Above and beyond the weekly parent outreach by teachers, the school provides parent workshops based on parents' needs throughout the year. All communications, written or spoken, are in English, Spanish, French, and Creole, the main languages, of the school. The parent workshops to date include meeting the Individual Education Program (IEP) Team, "Breakfast with the Principal", "Fathers take your child to school", and "Family Night". Parents and guardians sign a school and parent compact for their children with the regarding high expectations.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

There are common assessments in place and administered across classrooms. Teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Assessment results are not always used to adjust curricula and instruction. During instruction, teachers inconsistently make effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Although teachers implement the common assessments from Common Core-aligned curricula and are beginning to group students according to results from the New York State assessments and Accelerated Reader, they do not as yet consistently use the analyzed multiple assessment results to determine instructional and curricular adjustments to meet all students' needs. Teachers administered multiple assessments including the beginning of the year writing sample and baseline assessment for *ReadyGen* and *GO Math!*, as well as the Measure for Student Learning (MOSL). Teachers are in various stages of the process of putting students into skill-based groups determined from last-year's New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and math assessments data. Teachers collected the results from the multiple assessment data in binders and a few demonstrated the use of data to inform adjusted curricula and instruction based on students' needs. Although teachers were able to speak to the data-cycle process, minimal adjustments to curricula and instruction were evidenced, that may limit students' progress toward goals across grades and subjects.
- During classroom visits some teachers checked for understanding during the lesson. In a second grade bilingual class the teacher directed students to pair-share their answer to a question, called on a few to share their partners' answers, then confirmed their accuracy in determining if the statement was a fact or opinion. To check for understanding in a fourth grade ICT class, the teachers supported the guided reading group to facilitate the discussion of evidence cited to answer questions. In a bilingual third grade science class the teacher used several quick checks for understanding to ensure that students followed the logic as she moved from English to Spanish and back again. However, in a first grade class the teacher directed students to share with a partner and share out the partner's statement, and checked with one pair. As she continued through the lesson asking students to pair-share, one student sat disengaged as he did not have a partner, although he tried to get the teacher's attention. A partner was assigned to him at the end of that activity when the class was called to the rug where students did not need a partner.
- During classroom visits, student self-assessment and teachers adjusting the lesson to meet all students' needs was not observed. Regular and consistent monitoring of student progress based on instructional adjustments is beginning to become a regular practice during the school day that extends to the afterschool program.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/ content standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects for all students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Impact

The faculty builds coherence and promotes college and career readiness for all students through engaging and rigorous curricula in all subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has adopted Common Core-aligned curricula including *ReadyGen* and *GO Math!* Additionally, the school implements several computerized programs to support student learning, that includes *Accelerated Reader*, *Reading A-Z*, and *Wilson*. While *Wilson* is used specifically for students who meet the requirements for Response to Intervention both during and after school, *Accelerated Reader* is used across the school. *Reading A-Z* is used both in class and at home, as students and families have access to the electronic versions of these programs.
- Lesson plans are focused on the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Across grades and subjects, these plans include elements such as enduring understanding, essential questions, vocabulary review, accessing prior knowledge, mini lesson, guided and independent practice, sharing, and homework. Most lesson plans included planned scaffolding for English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and independent workers, based on need. Additionally, most plans include small group tasks that provide access through scaffolds and a few provide extensions. In several lesson plans, not only was a lesson objective listed but also a reading or math objective was included as well. Bilingual lesson plans are written in both English and Spanish. An area for listing higher-order questions is listed for all.
- Both faculty and administration stated that they build coherence using the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts to promote college and career readiness. Indicating the pacing and posting of the flow of the day are in evidence school wide. Professional development plans include learning activities for teachers to plan vertically and horizontally ensuring the development of engaging and rigorous tasks aligned to Common Core and the instructional shifts.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Student work products and discussions are not always accessible to students.

Impact

The uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of English Language Learners and students with disabilities does not yet reflect even levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- The staff and administration believe that students learn best by doing. Staff and administration expect that students are doing the work through a teacher-led workshop model with multiple entry points for student access. However, during some class visits, students had access to high-level questioning, peer discussion, bilingual instruction, real world manipulatives, or other scaffolds and supports.
- In a bilingual second grade class, students learned the difference between fact and opinion with the teacher who easily switched between Spanish to English. Students had opportunities to turn-and-talk to a partner and then share what the partner said. Likewise, in a bilingual third grade science class students explored inquiry tools, as the teacher posed questions that spiraled from low-level to mid-level and students pair-shared, shared whole class, and explored the real world manipulatives and various measurement tools supplied for each group. The teacher made connections during the lesson to the novel the whole third grade is reading. Yet students were not provided the opportunity to pair-share to make further sense of their learning in all classes. In a first grade math class, although students watched an engaging video to support learning how to subtract, the teacher, asked low-level questions for students to discuss but it became an agreement with the teacher instead. In a fifth grade math class, students were introduced to the order of operations as the teacher asked fill-in-the-blank, low-level *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) questions for students to discuss the essential question. Furthermore, in a fifth grade social studies lesson students were asked rapid-fire low-level DOK questions and the same few students continued to raise hands to answer, some using their textbooks to do so, without the opportunity to discuss with a peer. The balance of the class remained disengaged.
- Some students had the opportunity to collaborate in groups. In a fifth grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class students were grouped and were given the opportunity to self-select the method to solve the assigned problem, from drawing pictures to physically doing the jumping jacks. Similarly, in an fourth grade ICT literacy class students were in groups, working with peers or with teacher support to determine evidence, using citations from the class novel to answer a question. The strategic group led whole-class sharing of evidence with support from the teachers to incorporate the use of accountable talk when discussing evidence to support their reasons.

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

The majority of teachers is engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams and analyzes assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

The use of an inquiry approach is developing across the teams, as this work does not typically result in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers reported that they often share best practices during teacher team meetings. For example one teacher stated, and several others agreed, that they visit each other’s rooms to demonstrate using anchor charts. One teacher stated that he has learned from his colleagues. This spurred others to agree that they all learn together, through mutual respect and collegiality.
- The majority of teachers meets in grade teams at least twice weekly and has implemented a multitude of assessments and student writing to determine purposeful groups for students. While teams share best practices to advance student learning, a consistent inquiry approach that evaluates progress toward school-wide goals is not an established practice.
- Although teacher teams are established across grades, they are currently undergoing additional training on protocols and how to facilitate the meetings to achieve their goals of improving teacher practice, especially in engaging students and using assessment in instruction that will result in progress toward student achievement targets. To this end teachers are conducting a professional book study on these protocols to support the inquiry approach that they are refining.