



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 070

Elementary School Q070

**30-45 42 Street
Queens
NY 11103**

Principal: Donna Geller

**Date of review: February 26, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo**

The School Context

P.S. 070 is an elementary school with 1,004 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 18% Asian, 2% Black, 43% Hispanic, and 36% White students. The student body includes 20% English Language Learners and 13% 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 95.3%.

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	Well Developed
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:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and faculty communicate a culture of high expectations for teaching, professional collaboration, and consistent communication focused on best practices for teaching and learning.

Impact

Structures that support high expectations assure a culture of mutual accountability among staff members. As a result of teacher teams' and staff members' critical intervention and on-going feedback and advisement, students have ownership of their learning and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders, teachers and other staff members work in teams that include grade level, Pupil Personnel Team (PPT), Student Intervention Team (SIT), and Inquiry Teams. During these daily, weekly and monthly meetings, participants discuss goals and actions plans, develop professional development plans and create strategies to ensure all school goals are met. This establishes a culture of mutual accountability, which results in a strong school culture where staff members are equal partners in decision-making, thus ensuring a high level of success in teaching and learning across the school, as evidenced during classroom visits, review of the yearly professional development calendar, and discussions. For example during the Student Intervention Team meeting (SIT), the team discussed student speech screenings, service updates, identified new students at risk, student progress based on interventions received, and planned new strategies based on teacher and student's needs.
- Teachers share that the administration support their development through frequent professional learning focused on high expectations for all students. Through ongoing feedback, on-site and off-site intervisitations, teachers are able to meet the rigorous set of expectations for teaching and learning. Furthermore, a review of several Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) Evaluator Forms reveals that teachers are on target towards meeting the expectation of improving one performance level in component 3d *Using Assessment in Instruction*.
- Students communicated that teachers consistently provide them with feedback. Shared work during the student meeting indicated teacher feedback, student reflection, and student made revisions as a result of targeted feedback provided. Teachers offer students morning and afterschool programs for the bottom third students as well as English language learners. Additionally to support classroom instruction, teachers have developed academic intervention plans for at risk students, which include Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Response to Intervention (RTI), and multiple-entry points.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curriculum and school beliefs are consistently reflected in classes. Teaching practice provide entry points into lessons for all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Impact

School beliefs aligned to pedagogy and curricula drive the alignment of practices to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and focus teachers on instructional shifts, resulting in the engagement of students in the curriculum. While most lessons provide entry points for students, extensions and high quality supports are not yet consistent across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- During classroom visits, teachers planned questions in the lessons and posed questions of varying cognitive levels. For example, in a grade 4 social studies class, students discussed with a partner what does the Bill of Rights guarantee and what problem was the Bill of Rights written to solve? Students worked with their partners responding to the questions, and some students expanded their thinking by adding on to statements posed by others. Similarly, in an English Language Learners grade 5 class, students engaged with a partner to peer assess a writing piece using a rubric. However, this level of questioning and discourse was not evident in all classrooms.
- Teachers plan lessons and use scaffolds to provide multiple entry points into instruction in response to students' needs and interests, including special education students. The use of word walls across classrooms, and the word of the week help all students build their vocabulary. Also, the school focuses on supporting English Language Learners (ELLs) by focusing on vocabulary, jeopardy games for content knowledge, and hiring certified ELL teachers. However, lessons do not always challenge all students, particularly high performers to their full potential, in that assignments do not include opportunities for them to demonstrate higher –order thinking skills or extend their learning, thus limiting even greater learning outcomes.
- Across classrooms, lessons are consistently informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and include the introduction of vocabulary, motivation, modeling, active engagement and assessment. Mini lessons are connected to previous concepts to provide multiple entry points and increase engagement. For example, in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) Kindergarten class, students engaged in counting up to one hundred by using groups of tens. Students had the opportunity to engage in differentiated tasks on their own or with their peers to build critical thinking skills with the aids of graphic organizers, manipulatives, visual and discussion prompts etc. However, in some classrooms, tasks still contain extensive scaffolds and are teacher-directed, hindering student independence and ownership.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure the alignment of curricula to standards and instructional shifts through designing engaging, rigorous instruction to support diverse learners' needs.

Impact

School staff expose all students to common core aligned curriculum that demands thinking and participation. The Instructional shift of *Academic Vocabulary* in English Language Arts, science, math and social studies in all subject areas ensures coherence across grades.

Supporting Evidence

- The reading, writing and math units of study align with the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Assessments such as running records, independent reading levels, Reading Street and the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) support their work on the alignment of curriculum. As a result, students are showing growth on their Independent Reading Levels, (IRL) as evidenced by grade 5 data.
- Curriculum and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grade and subject areas for ELLs and students with disabilities. Differentiation, modifications, and multiple entry points were provided across classrooms visited, where most students had different assignments and product outcome expectations to meet their individual academic needs, as evidenced in lesson plans reviewed in all classroom visits.
- In a grade five fractions math task, students are required to complete a pattern with fractions by writing and applying a rule using addition or subtraction. They must make up their own sequence of 5 mixed numbers; find the rule and the next number to the tenths, hundredths and thousandths.
- In a grade five a social studies class the task required students to analyze the Bill of Rights to determine its importance in a democracy. Students used primary sources and integrated these in developing their own Bill of Rights for the class rules. Students needed to explain the problem that the Bill of Rights was written to solve, and the rights the Bill of Rights guarantee its citizens.
- The school's instructional shift on academic vocabulary is palpable throughout the school as evidenced in the hallways, classrooms visited and student use. Students constantly build the vocabulary they need to be able to access grade-level complex texts as evidenced during classroom visits. For example; a second grade student wrote: "I attempt to modify my handwriting by practicing to write neater", similarly, a grade 5 student wrote; "The painters modified the decorations and further embellished the walls of the house". Furthermore, the morning announcement begins with the "Master Wordsmith" announcing the word of the week.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms teachers use common assessments aligned to curricula and consistently provide actionable feedback.

Impact

The school's assessment practices results in actionable feedback to students to maximize student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula-aligned assessment practices are implemented to monitor students 'progress and provide actionable feedback. Informal assessments include checkmarks, unit tests, and exit slips, short quizzes and written comments; teachers use this information to inform instruction.
- Teacher teams and individual teachers use English Language Arts and math item analysis information as well as baseline and interim assessment data to supplement summative data and identify student performance levels. Rubrics are used to assess student work and are attached to individual student's writing pieces as evidenced during the student meeting. However, the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment during instruction in order to make immediate adjustments to lessons is not strategically practiced across the school, limiting teacher's ability to identify and address the needs of ELLS and students with disabilities during daily lessons and modify targeted, differentiated interventions to accelerate learning.
- Classroom visits and meetings with teachers indicated that the school uses ongoing assessments to group students and adjust lesson plans as well as provide feedback on student work including next steps. Students say that teachers confer with them and give them strategies on how to improve their work and they are able to plan for next steps that have led to improvement in their writing.
- All teachers' use and create English Language Arts (ELA), math and content area rubrics to provide written feedback to students. This is a consistent practice across the school, as evidenced on hallway bulletin boards and shared during the student meeting. For example, grade 5 students used a five paragraph persuasive essay to present their opinion on an issue. The task for the students was to choose one of three topics and write a five-paragraph essay stating and defending their argument with three supporting details. Students' stated that a grade 5 opinion rubric and teacher comments helped them to continue to improve their writing.

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

Teachers participate in inquiry work and systematically analyze the impact of teacher practice and strengthening leadership roles. Teacher teams play an integral role in school decisions and are currently expanding their work, and deepening their study of the needs of individual students.

Impact

The work of teacher teams’ results in teacher leadership throughout the school, and deep understanding of the instructional practices that impact student learning. Teams are deepening their focus in using data and aligning instructional strategies that supports goals and strengthen teacher practice.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers collaborate in professional teams. Teachers are divided into grade bands that meet on a daily and weekly basis and extend their work during professional development on Mondays and Tuesdays to engage in inquiry work. They utilize this time to engage in norming and analysis of student work through inquiry practice, development and evaluation of common assessments, implement school-wide instructional practices, embed school-wide goals, and continually promote improved achievement for all learners.
- Administration and teacher leaders are able to identify distributed leadership structures that are deeply rooted in the school’s day to day operations and articulate how they serve as a medium for teacher input in strategic decisions that affect student achievement. Teacher leaders create agendas, use a “planning for implementation” template and teams are beginning to submit completed templates on GoogleDocs to create transparency and shared responsibility among the entire staff. All planning documents are public, accessible, and demonstrate decisions and follow-through on key decisions at the grade level as observed during the grade 5 Inquiry team meeting. Additionally, teachers also play an important role on the Professional Development Committee and use data to create opportunities for adult learning as evidenced by a review of the Professional Development Calendar Sessions.
- The school’s ability to meet the target in the Student Closing the Achievement Gap section of the School Quality Guide is attributed to the efforts of teacher teams and their work in identifying target populations for interventions, and refining common core aligned curricula and assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and math.