



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 097 Forest Park

Elementary School Q097

**85-52 85th Street
Queens
NY 11421**

Principal: Marilyn Custodio

**Date of review: January 8, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Terrell**

The School Context

The Forest Park School is an elementary school with 740 students from grade Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 73% Hispanic, 4% White, and 19% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.2%.

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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Additional Findings	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	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	Focus	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders align the curricular to the Common Core Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricular and academic tasks are planned and refined using students work products and data to support individual and groups of students.

Impact

The strategic focus on integrating the instructional shifts results in coherence of the curricula across grades that promotes college and career readiness skills for all students. The targeted refinement of academic tasks improves students' cognitive engagement and detailed writing.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders support the integration of the instructional shifts through the use of *ReadyGen* for English Language Arts and *GO Math!* to support curricula. Both of these programs embed alignment to the Common Core standards. The science curriculum is supported through the use of the Full Option Science System (FOSS). Students are exposed to the Arts through the integration of Ballet Tech and the New Voices play writing project. A specific focus on writing has been targeted across the curriculum through the use of informational texts and argumentative writing. Academic vocabulary is highlighted in units of study to support students' cognitive engagement in texts. For example, students were required to show their understanding of the words "clever" and "boastful" as they compared character traits in *Odysseus*. In addition, the school uses *Story Works* which provides a high level of books to support varied levels of student interest across the curricula.
- The school incorporates various curriculum maps to intentionally drive the development of writing skills. For example, across grades students used graphic organizers to compare and contrast characters and use the information to develop their writing. In an upper grade class students were focused on developing an opinion essay as they responded to the question, "Which text do you think does a better job of conveying Native American life to the reader? The students' opinion centered on the books, *The Birchbank House* and *New York's First People*.
- Teachers modified the curriculum with the use of RADD (Restate, Answer, Detail, Detail) to strategically support students in writing text based responses to questions. Teachers used excerpts from *Honeysuckle House* in Engage NY to support more focused reading across the grades. Specific questions were incorporated across curriculum maps. In grade 3 for example, students are required to demonstrate understanding of text by reflecting on the following questions, "Why do you think the author wrote this text?" Student products must also provide evidence from the text to support their thinking.
- Across classrooms, walls are covered with pictures, paired with words to support language acquisition for English Language Learners (ELL's). The principal and teachers shared that students were having a difficult time comprehending some of the reading passages in *ReadyGen*. Consequently, teams across the grades reduced the passages to smaller parts to support cognitive engagement for all students. Grade 5 students are departmentalized for math to target the specific needs of various groups of students. This has resulted in an increase in students' progress on formative assessments.

Area of Focus

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

All teachers engage in cycles of professional collaborations and analysis of grade wide data to determine trends across the grade. Teacher input in decision-making centers on each grade.

Impact

Teams are moving towards school wide instructional coherence of practices across grades to support student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide opportunities for all teachers to participate within professional collaborations. The principal has scheduled two common preps for each grade to meet and analyze data. In addition, teachers use the extended time on Mondays to collaborate on instructional strategies to improve students' performance and their classroom practices. The grade 3 team shared that they have been looking at trends in students' writing. They have noted a lack of detail in students' constructed response essays. Consequently, they have incorporated the use of a 2-point rubric from Engage NY to evaluate students' work and to establish consistence of expectations across the grade.
- Teams are consistently evaluating grade wide trends. Teachers on grade 3 are using the RADD graphic organizer as an instructional strategy to support student achievement in writing. The team indicated that they articulate with the upper grade teachers on strategies they are using to improve students' progress, however they have not met with the grade two teachers to articulate strategies they are using to support best practices. Teachers on grades 2 and 5 engage in departmentalized math instruction once a week to support groups of students, however this practice is not yet embedded across the school to support articulated school wide instructional goals.
- The principal provides opportunities for teachers to engage in distributed leadership within their grade teams. For example, teams are led by a team leader, which rotates every cycle. In addition, the principal has hired a Teacher Development Coach who meets with school leaders to determine the focus of her work with teams. While the leadership meets with vertical teams and the Teacher Team Coach monthly, they are moving towards sitting in on team meeting more frequently in order to provide specific feedback aligned to school wide goals to inform teacher practices.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across the school there is an articulated belief system that students learn best in small groups that is supported by the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*. In most classrooms, teaching strategies provide multiple entry points aligned to students' instructional levels.

Impact

As a result of small group instruction most students are working at their proficiency levels and are generating work products that reflect higher order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Students' academic levels guide teachers in designing and planning instructional activities to push increased thinking skills. In most classrooms, students were observed working in small independent groups and engaged in small guided instructional groups with classroom teachers. For example, in an upper grade classroom, the teacher was engaged in providing students with direct instruction on editing a writing task. The teacher focused a student on revising sentences by removing extra words, in order to support a more fluent and smoother read. The teacher conferenced with individual students and provided feedback to each student in the guided group. Other students were observed working independently at the computer, using a writing checklist to edit their essay on explorers. A review of the students work products reflected more details and organization in their essays.
- Students engage in differentiated instructional strategies to support increased learning. In a lower grade class, students were observed working in partnerships to solve math problems. The partners were working on solving two digit multiplication problems. Each partner had to check the other's work by using a different strategy to explain the answer. The students used strategies such as partial products, regrouping and the area model to explain their work. Two students were working at the iReady computer on math activities that provided more challenging tasks to support their instructional levels. Teachers also use "brain pop" as a resource to provide background information to students on various topics.
- In a grade 3 classroom, the teacher provided opportunities to challenge students' thinking. For example, the class was given the problem 24 divided by 3. The students were asked, "Can you think of a number story that goes with this equation?" A student responded, "The teacher has 24 cookies. She put them into 3 boxes. How many cookies are in each box?" The students seated on the carpet were instructed to, "Talk to their partner and explain how you know how many groups to make." The students responded that they used the bar model.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers use assessments to analyze student outcomes that are aligned to the school's curricula. Common assessments are used to determine students' progress toward goals.

Impact

Data analysis provides feedback to inform instruction and curricula adjustments and guides students toward their goals to increase achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, teachers evaluate multiple forms of assessment data such as Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), running records, Performance Based Assessments (PBA) as well as New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessment results and normed classroom rubrics to inform their instructional strategies and to provide feedback to students. For example, an analysis of grade 5 math results lead the school to departmentalize math instruction by proficiency levels on Fridays. This intervention is leading to more positive results in math achievement for individual students. It also offers more opportunities to challenge thinking for accelerated students.
- Common unit assessments are used to inform teams on setting goals for students and making curricular adjustments. The school conducted an item analysis of ELA results and determined the need to strengthen students' constructed writing responses. This information was used to make adjustments to the curricular. For example, the curricula modification to the grade 3 curriculum map states "Writing Focus: Use RADD to answer short response questions. What are characteristics of a short response?"
- Students state that their teachers review their work and provide feedback to them on a rubric. The feedback helps them to move toward their next goal. One student stated that his goal is to use the correct verb tense on his words. Another student stated that her goal is to add more details to her writing. Students also state that that they use checklist to help them understand their next steps. Teachers are using normed rubrics to grade students' work and individual conference notes to determine next steps for their students. Teachers use a 2point rubric to analyze students' writing to determine grade wide and classroom trends, in order to inform instructional strategies to support increased student achievement.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders provide communicate high expectations to the staff aligned to *the Danielson Framework for Teaching*. The administration and teachers communicate with parents to support them in preparing their children to meet high expectations.

Impact

As a result of high expectations for all staff, teachers' instruction reflects more alignment to the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*. Information provided to parents support a home school partnership that connects to a path to college and careers readiness skills for their children.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct ongoing walkthroughs in classrooms and provide feedback to teachers to improve instructional practices in alignment with the Danielson Framework. Teachers and the principal state that there is a focus on pushing differentiated groupings and developing critical thinking questions. At the beginning of the school year all staff engaged in a workshop in which they reflected on practices from the previous year and how they could improve upon their work. Consequently, there are more expectations of teachers engaging in best practices by learning from outside sources as well as from each other. For example, the principal has hired a talent coach to support teams in disaggregating data to determine the needs of their students as well as lifting trends across the grade and teachers conduct inter-visitations to view best practices.
- Engaging students in higher order discussions is a goal the principal has set for all staff to push students' peer-to-peer engagement and critical thinking. During professional development on Mondays, grade two Teachers use data to conduct a lesson study to support students' critical thinking. They plan a lesson, observe a colleague and provide low inference feedback to the teacher observed. The lesson is refined by the teachers using low inference data to support consistency of best practices across the grade.
- Families are invited to come out to Family Night in September. During this time they are provided information on schoolwide goals. Parents state that they meet with teachers during Family Night and discuss strategies used in the classroom, such as accountable talk, and student check lists to monitor goals. The school provides workshops on the Common Core Standards, Homework Help as well as Zumba. School leaders provide a monthly school calendar that highlights school wide events and units of study for grades. Ongoing communication is maintained via emails and phone calls to families to inform them of their children's academic progress and social development. Additionally, the "DOJO" text app is used by teachers and parents to communicate exam progress, missed homework and other school related events.