



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 169 Bay Terrace

Elementary School Q169

**18-25 212 Street
Queens
NY 11360**

Principal: Vanessa Rosa Chambers

**Date of review: October 27, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

The School Context

P.S.169 Bay Terrace is an elementary school with 420 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 34% Asian, 4% Black, 20% Hispanic, and 40% White students. The student body includes 4% English Language Learners and 17% 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 95.4%.

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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty engage in a rigorous process of curriculum development, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher order thinking are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact

The engaging curricula promote college and career readiness for all students including English language learners and students with disabilities. Purposeful decisions aligning curricula result in coherence and result in all students demonstrating their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty have engaged in a rigorous process of curriculum development aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards that offers students a wide range of experiences and choices. Unit plans indicate that they meet the needs of individual students. A language component is embedded into plans so that students with disabilities and English Language Learners are provided access through multiple entry points. To ensure that students' needs are being met a beginning of the year 'data dive' was implemented to ascertain weaknesses. As a result, grade 5 teachers saw the need to revise the argumentative reading and writing units. Additional teacher workshops were organized to look at non-fiction units of study and create foundation skills for students. Interim data provided additional information and again revisions were made to the curricula.
- The school utilizes Teachers College Reading and Writing Project for English Language Arts that includes strong support from the Teachers College. This program is fully aligned and includes the use of complex texts with a focus on key standards such as annotating for details and evidence. The Teachers College Continuum for English Language Arts includes scaffolding and enrichment components for all learners, including English language learners.
- The grade level curriculum units in science and social studies are aligned to match the texts of what students are reading in English language arts with supplemental activities from *Engage NY*. Teachers have aligned units of study with close reading skills, annotating texts and details in supporting nonfiction reading. There is a focus on strategies that solidify the coherence of what is taught and providing students multiple entry points, through the consistent use of graphic organizers, exit slips, and small group grows and glows. Unit plans across grades and subject areas include whole group, individualized study, peer dialogue, enrichment and remediation teaching points and tools for supporting all students. All curriculum documents are on Dropbox to support teachers in sharing information.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teachers use assessment strategies providing on-going checks for understanding and actionable feedback to students. Common assessments, rubrics and grading policies are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery.

Impact

Assessment practices provide students with actionable feedback regarding their achievement and students understand their next steps. Teachers utilize the tracking of student progress to make effective instructional adjustments allowing all students' learning needs to be met.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses common assessments and performance task rubrics in all content areas. The analysis of data is examined to look for patterns and trends across subjects and grades. Data is tracked using formative assessments during lessons allowing for adjustment to lessons. In a majority of classrooms teachers used common assessments to assign differentiated tasks and provide actionable feedback. However explicit and differentiated feedback is not always given to all higher performing students thus limiting the students from accelerating their learning.
- Across the majority of classrooms, on-going checks for understanding were used, and timely and effective adjustments were made to inform instruction and develop purposeful grouping. Pre and post unit assessment including writing samples in all grades is used to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals. The latest assessment results indicate 49.7% of students achieved proficiency in English language arts and 61.1% in mathematics.
- Teachers have created or modified rubrics and checklists aligned to key standards for each unit of study based on pre and post assessments aligned to Math In Focus and Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. In classrooms teachers pose challenging questions promoting students with self-assessment opportunities and guide them to turn and talk with partners to check for their understanding throughout lessons. Techniques such as 'thumbs up, thumbs down, and thumbs side' are consistently used during lessons. Teachers utilize conferencing notes while checking for understanding as they circulate the classroom. As a result of this consistent monitoring of student learning, teachers are setting specific grade goals and making appropriate adjustments to curriculum and instruction to include a deeper emphasis on the instructional shifts.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across all classrooms, teaching practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs informed by the Danielson framework that effective instruction yields high quality student work. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions into the curricula for all students.

Impact

The challenging tasks that are provided to all learners enable them to demonstrate higher order thinking in their student work.

Supporting Evidence

- Students in all grades demonstrate competency in literacy by completing tasks focusing on both fiction and non-fiction reading, writing, speaking and listening assignments aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards in the units of study as shown through interim assessment data. The school administration and faculty review student work products to inform instruction and develop supports and extensions for all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.
- In all classrooms students participated in class discussions by responding to both teacher and student generated questions. Students not only answered questions, they asked questions and extended their own thinking and that of their peers by providing examples from the text or discussions to support their contributions. In classes, teachers asked open-ended questions to push students' thinking, facilitate responses, and give students an opportunity to deepen their thinking by questioning each other during think, pair, share, as well as in whole class discussions. In a kindergarten class the students were examining sight words with peer helpers. The turn and talk centered on picking out words they know and what they mean in relation to what the character was feeling. Flexible grouping included remedial, on-level and enrichment groups with all students learning the same content concepts.
- All lessons plans had multiple entry points embedded into their lessons. Student groups were flexible, depending on the need. Students were observed sharing tasks with their peers that required deep thinking. In a math class students were asked to do multi-step problems and share out explanations using the reason for the chosen process and the evidence. Students used both multiplication and division to solve a word problem based on a real life situation. They asked each other what they knew, didn't know, and what did they need to use to succeed at the task. Students underlined the most important parts of the question and discussed what operation was needed. A tape diagram, manipulatives, and sentence starters were also used to assure that all students were cognitively engaged.
- All teachers are participating in peer observations and have set up triads based on their self-selected area of focus, such as questioning techniques, or a review of observation data, aligned to the Danielson Framework. This work is informing instructional shifts as well as discussions at the team and school levels. Teachers used visuals, leveled texts and a variety of graphic organizers to assist in checking for understanding. There are inter-visitations at other schools to see best practices through the Learning Partners Program, and the Cycles of Learning Document.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the school a culture for learning exists that communicates and embeds high expectations shared by staff, families and students connected to college and career readiness.

Impact

These communicated high expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability for teaching and learning. The entire faculty and staff successfully partner with families to support student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- Input from teachers and families supports initiatives, curriculum decisions and special programs that promote student success. There are structures and systems that communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness and promote a successful partnership with families. In the teacher team meetings it was stated that the support of administration and their peers promotes a common language and provides a strong culture for learning. In the student meeting, students were able to articulate how ready they are for their next level and to set goals for moving forward. One student when asked what to do when work is too hard shared that you “try again, form a question, mark the words or work that is tricky and try to do it again”. Another student stated that the teacher would give him a new strategy to find the answer. As evidenced in the teacher team meeting, teachers are working collaboratively towards ensuring high expectations through daily instructional practices using Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.
- Parents shared that they appreciated the commitment of the school to their children and the consistent and constant communication of their child’s progress via email, phone calls and in-person meetings. It was discussed that high expectations are reflected in the purpose and respect that is visible in hallways, classroom and offices. The goals set forth by the principal are communicated clearly and consistently. The school works with the BELL Academy middle school to have students mentor struggling learners. Parent packets focused on “supporting your child at home” assist parents with identifying areas needed for improvement. These supports give families the opportunity to collaborate with the school on an on-going basis. Students participate in frequent trips related to career and college opportunities. These have included Carnegie Hall , The Liberty Science Center, NY Hall of Science, American Museum of Natural History, the Queens Botanical garden and Zoo. There is an unwavering belief by the entire school community that students will achieve high levels of success working toward a college or career path, when consistently articulated by all stakeholders.
- There is an active school leadership team with full participation from the Parent Teacher Association membership. Class Dojo, Dropbox, E-chalk, on-line apps, as well as class pages keep families informed and their expectations high. Families are provided parent workshops, parent ‘hall walks’ and an open door policy across the school. Parents believe that they are blessed to have students in the school. A full arts program for every student including music, yoga, visual arts and art technology help students make informed discussions around possible careers and college programs.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations. Leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in school-wide instructional coherence, improved pedagogy, student work and progress. Shared leadership structures build teacher capacity to resulting in improve student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers serve as leaders as a result of the distributive leadership structures that exist. Teacher led professional development sessions, creation of curriculum maps, setting schedules with Learning Partners Programs, inter-visitations and peer collaborations are examples of teachers serving as leaders. Teacher teams across grades are working together to plan lessons aligned to the Common Core generating text dependent questions to reinforce students' reading habits. Referring to the text for evidence promoting critical thinking skills was evidenced in lesson plans. Common language and alignment to practices in rubrics, and analysis of student performance at the end of assigned tasks were observed in all classes.
- Teacher Teams participate in common planning, grade level planning, inquiry and professional development meetings to facilitate increased expertise in pedagogy around the Common Core learning Standards and the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as well as Webb's Depth of Knowledge protocol. Teachers often meet during lunch periods, preparation periods and outside of school hours to ensure planning for student success. At one team meeting teachers discussed the practice of "teaching for transfer". Rubrics from the previous grades are examined with backward planning in mind. Teachers then designed rubrics, aligned to the previous grade, creating a continuum of learning. There is open communication within teacher triads and a master teacher provides low inference notes about lessons, resources, protocols, and assessment techniques. In order to ensure coherence in curriculum and planning there are inquiry teams in addition to grade and subject area teams. As a result, all teachers work collaboratively toward ensuring quality teaching. High expectations are incorporated into daily instructional practices as a result of the work of teacher led teams that focus on looking at the impact of their practice on student performance.
- The teachers formed a reading Olympics to 'wake-up' engagement in the classroom and tailored to different learning styles. There is a teacher created inter-visitation reflection form used in the triads that includes "Glows and Grows" for the teachers. Interesting questions such as, "What am I going to try out in my classroom?" or "What can I use involving multiple entry points?" are included on this graphic organizer for teacher use. Teachers believe they now have more interest in working across grades to better meet the needs of students. Data sources are consistently used at meetings. Meeting agendas indicate a consistent practice of reviewing student work pieces for success and needs.