



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

**P.S. 201 The Discovery School for Inquiry &
Research**

Elementary School Q201

**65-11 155th Street
Queens
NY 11367**

Principal: Rebecca Lozada

**Date of review: December 8, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

The School Context

P.S. 201 The Discovery School for Inquiry and Research is an elementary school with 513 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 19% Asian, 40% Black, 40% Hispanic, and 4% White students. The student body includes 10% English Language Learners and 20% 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 92.3%.

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	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 leader and faculty engage in a rigorous process of curriculum development aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts as well as Danielson Framework.

Impact

Engaging curricula and tasks promote rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills across a majority of classrooms. There are purposeful decisions made in revising curricula to promote coherence and rigorous habits for all learners across grades and content areas. Academic tasks push student thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The administration along with teacher leaders examined the unit plans in Ready-Gen. Curricula decisions were made to use Teachers College for enriched writing and enhanced literacy foundations. Upon examination, these units closely meet the needs of individual students, using rigorous content, critical thinking and problem solving skills along with an ESL use of academic language component that is embedded into the plans for struggling learners. Strategic planning within and across grades address student deficiencies in speaking and listening skills revealed through a comprehensive needs assessments.
- Teacher teams observed, stated that Go Math is used and teacher created additional plans that included rubrics, conference notes, templates and student reflection pieces. Rigorous guiding questions, student rubrics and culminating tasks with daily lesson objectives outlining the flow of a given unit ensures coherence to Danielson, Webb's Depth of Knowledge and the ESL grammar continuum as shown during classroom visits. In a classroom with ENLs and Students with disabilities I saw 'Phonics Dance' giving all students the opportunity to understand sounds related to words. The parents were aware of this program and sing the songs and do the dances at home.
- In addition, Fountas and Pinnell is used for running records during the literacy block of 120 minutes each day. There are anchor texts, independent and guided reading extensions, flexible groupings, using scaffolding and multiple entry points, that are embedded into the curriculum units/lesson plans. Examples include a progression of literacy skills that begin with students expressing their opinion of stories in pre-kindergarten, writing opinion and research studies in grades kindergarten and first, transitioning to persuasive essays, narrative essays in grades two and three. In addition upper grades are using debates and discussion groups.
- Math curriculum is aligned to the CCLS and works to have students engaged in mathematical practice in all grade levels that use word problems and emphasizes critical thinking and depth of understanding through interactive lessons, research based instructional approaches and best practices that use differentiated instructional resources to ensure success for all students.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school uses common assessments in all subject areas, tracks student progress and adjusts curricula and instructional decisions. Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers consistently use checks for understanding.

Impact

The school's data systems informs students of their next learning steps and are effective in informing instruction and tracking student progress, and support teachers in making effective adjustments to meet student needs.

Supporting Evidence

- There are Math Performance Base-line Assessments, as well as ongoing assessments, i.e. mid-year, end of year formal assessments. Math, English Language Arts pre and post benchmarks, baseline and midyear assessment along with Early Childhood Literacy Assessment Systems are shared within grade team meetings. Interim assessments are aligned to the Common Core learning Standards and administered along with teacher-generated information to create individual, whole and small group corrective instructional plans. Teachers conduct formative and summative assessments in the form of exit slips, journal entries, quizzes, unit assessments, baseline, rubrics and interim assessment to monitor student.
- Teachers' monitor student progress using Fountas & Pinnell and assessments through an online Goggle Docs tracking system. The teachers stated that they meet to outline and analyze assessments for accurate information about student progress. In addition to accessing Measurement of Student learning, (MoSL), assessments, the Teacher Teams both grade and vertical, along with the administration, added assessments that would be used for formative purposes. The principal stated that mid-year data analysis results in modifications as needed.
- The teachers stated that they are empowered to revise lessons, units, or order of units. They can also decide on rubrics and tasks to use for projects. Teachers check for understanding, as seen in classroom visited, use entrance/exit slips, 'agree cards', questioning for explanation, stop and jot prompts, parking lot, gallery walks to elicit information about individual student understanding. Students are learning to self-assess, use checklists, rubrics, think/ pair /share activities and turn and talk to engage and assess.
- Teachers, as evidenced through classroom visits, circulate taking notes through observations, conferencing and student quick checks, purposeful prompts, to make on the spot teaching decisions and often decide to re-teach the prior assignment so that all students have a clear understanding of the content.
- Student progress is tracked by traits and class results allowing for both grade and class analysis of student learning outcomes as well as alignment of curricula to standards. Students are well aware of their next steps, as evidenced in the classroom and in the student meeting. Students use of concept maps, problem solving grids and rubrics are helping to inform conversations across the curriculum.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Pedagogy is aligned to the curricula and reflects a coherent set of beliefs about student learning that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts. Teaching strategies include entry points for all students, yields high quality student work

Impact

The alignment of pedagogy to curricula and the use of scaffolding and effective questioning strategies and multiple entry points enable all learners to be engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. Across the majority of classrooms, curricula extensions support students to produce meaningful work products and promote critical thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher lessons include scaffolding, teacher modeling, visual and graphics and hands-on learning. Teachers provide small group instruction and the use of the SMART board facilitates interactive learning. Teacher pedagogy revolves around effective questioning, academic task implementation and strategic entry points for all learners as shown through student thinking and work products.
- The teachers revise curriculum units to include a common understanding of what excellent pedagogy looks like by planning on integrating a variety of forms for feedback, differentiating instruction to address the needs of individual students and constantly monitoring student understanding.
- In classrooms visited, there were students engaged in detailed conversations around literature, non-fiction text and math processes. Across classrooms teachers consistently used questioning strategies and instructional resources to support students learning needs. Rigorous learning tasks reflected high levels of thinking and student ownership. Students were encouraged to collaborate with one another, often in small groups or pair/share discussions. Large group discussions were limited and extensions for higher performing students were in place.
- In classrooms visited, teachers acted as facilitators and encouraged students to collaborate and frame their own questions and responding to other students questions. While teachers circulated they conferred with groups. Students at the student meeting expressed that they are comfortable talking with each other and discussing their thoughts on a subject/project as well as participating in writing peer assessments.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for professionalism and instruction to the entire staff aligned with Danielson Framework for Teaching, partnering with families to support student progress. The Leadership has established a learning community that conveys high expectations that focuses the entire community on raising student achievement.

Impact

By consistently communicating high expectations to staff, student and families, and creating a system of mutual accountability for those expectations, teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that sets a unified high expectation level for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- There is a culture of mutual trust and respect throughout the school that is visible in the hallways, classroom and offices. The goals set forth by the administration and the instructional team is for deliberate, consistent expectations that strengthen the vision of the school. Instructional plans are aligned to the CCLS and to Danielson Framework and are evident in all curriculum units and lesson plans. Teachers' conference with students on their work to provide individual support in content areas. Teacher Teams have created checklists and rubrics and utilized to provide clear feedback with glow and grow highlighted. Students stated in our meeting that "Teachers are like your parents, but not."
- Students and parents feel safe and supported, and all stakeholders value each other. There is a strong Arts and Technology component in the school that extends learning beyond the classroom, enhanced by a full time music and dance teacher, as seen through the work in the hallways. There is a Family Welcome Center that also acts as an environment for weekly workshops that include instructional tips and allow parents to reinforce activities to support literacy and math at home. The principal has monthly building tours to encourage families to visit and attendance has increased since September. Email feedback from teachers help families understand student progress toward expectations. The parents stated at the meeting that they know what their child is learning and where they need to go to progress.
- In addition to teacher feedback and protocols, the administration has developed a supervisory inquiry protocol to identify consistent positive and negative trends, identify next steps and create goals, all around high expectations. Administrator and teachers recognize student for their academic achievements as well as their citizenship through Students of the Month. Guidance support is provided for physical, social and emotional support as well as academics. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, is a link setting expectations around educational activities so that children do better in school. Administrators and staff provide clear lines of communication that provides parents with opportunities to focus on student learning. Parents' attend workshops that focus on ways parents can support their children at home. This work has led to a common language between staff and parents. With parents having the tools to monitor and support their children, high expectations are supported, embraced and reinforced by the staff leading to a culture of mutual accountability to increase student outcomes.

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

Distributive leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership. A shared vision has led to teacher teamwork that is data driven, inquiry based and targeted for student success.

Impact

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry based structured professional collaborations and teachers have a key role in the decision making process; thus resulting in a collaborative professional learning community. The work of each team has resulted in school-wide coherence, strengthened teacher instructional capacity and improved student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- At the fourth grade teacher team meeting teachers were looking at student work in literacy and making connection/noticing to identify student strengths and challenges. Teachers were also looking for trends and patterns: “Is this grade-wide?” The teachers stated that they are constantly modifying how information is given to their students. Today’s meeting indicated that more ‘front-loading’ was needed, using specific words to assist the ENL population as well as students with disabilities.
- At the vertical team meeting it was stated that the ‘main idea’ has become a school wide focus using the simple to the complex to inform teaching and learning. SEE, SEEK, WONDER is visible in all classrooms is a hands on model that enhances student choices, multiple entry points, use of technology through laptops and iPads to further inquiry based on the STEM model. The lens of the school wide focus of inquiry is data driven and patterns and trends are identified and examined by all teams. At the meeting observed it was noticed through exit slips that 24 out of 68 fourth graders were able to infer the main idea in a paragraph. It was also notices that many students were able to identify the topic but not necessarily the main idea or details to follow. These findings indicated that the teams will create and conduct regular assessment in the main idea and will compare new data with previous assessment. Subgroups will be created and remediation will begin.
- All teachers are engaged in extensive, teacher led process of instructional rounds and inter-visitations. Teachers have created their own protocol for looking at work with the approval of the administration. Agendas and schedules for teachers observing one another and providing warm and cool feedback as created by the teachers. Best practices are shared and the teachers discussed that the trust that has developed between teachers and administration is strong and has created an open and collaborative space for inter-visitations, sharing lessons and unit plans.