



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 212

Elementary School Q212

**34-25 82nd Street
Queens
NY 11372**

Principal: Carin Ellis

**Date of review: January 8, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo**

The School Context

P.S. 212 is an elementary school with 805 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 26% Asian, 1% Black, 61% Hispanic, and 11% White students. The student body includes 14% English Language Learners and 14% 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 95.1%.

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	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	Focus	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and successfully partner with families in communicating expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to support student progress toward those expectations.

Impact

As a result, staff share a sense of mutual accountability for all students to meet expectations and successfully partner with families to support student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- 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 Annual Professional Review (APR) Evaluator Forms reveal that teachers are increasing their MoTP rating in Domain 4: Growing and Developing Professionally, from effective to highly effective from the first observation, as compared to subsequent observations.
- School leaders, the Data Specialist, and other staff members work in teams, such as the Rtl, Grade Level, School Leadership, and Professional Learning Committee. Together, they discuss goals, develop action plans, and create strategies to ensure all school goals are met. These professional collaborations, result 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 plan, and discussions during the team meetings.
- Ongoing feedback to families is surfaced in monthly newsletters that outline curricula and assessments, Think Central accounts assist parents with the GoMath! curriculum, and Pearson accounts are created for parents to assist their children with Reading. Additionally, Math workshops for parents aligned to the Common Core standards were offered to parents. A 'Meet the Teacher' night event informed parents about curriculum expectations in all content areas. Furthermore, parents stated that through email, monthly calendar, Class Messenger or Remind 101 teachers communicate with parents. Consequently, families are able to work with teachers to support their children at home and outside of school experiences. Moreover, during Parent Engagement Tuesdays, teachers meet with parents to establish partnerships in order to support students' progress towards college and career readiness.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments aligned with the school's curricula, to make instructional adjustments and meet students' learning needs.

Impact

The school assessment practices result in teachers' making instructional adjustments and providing students with next steps to improve learning. Yet, specific feedback and ongoing checks for understanding varies across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams work together in order to align assessments to the curricula and make curricular adjustments. Each teacher team has created pre and post assessments based on the Common Core learning standards in writing, and the Teacher's College Writing continuum. Furthermore, this year, K-5 teachers are implementing the most recent Teacher's College Running Records, which are also aligned to the Common Core learning standards, to assess students' "just right" reading levels. A review of grade 3 Benchmark Reading Levels data from September to December indicate that 95% of the students are on target to meet their reading goal.
- Curricula-aligned assessment practices are implemented to monitor students' progress and provide feedback. Informal assessments include, conference notes, checklists, unit pre and post assessments and exit slips across all subjects that provide authentic information on student performance and progress. Additionally, data collected from pre-assessments is used to plan, re-teach, and create groups in reading, math and writing. However, effective lesson adjustments based on checks for understanding varies across the school.
- Classroom visits and meeting 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 learning process. However, classroom visits also indicated that teachers across the majority of classrooms do not always utilize checks for understanding to make immediate adjustments in daily lessons. For example in an instructional co teaching math lesson the teachers did not accurately assess that most students understood the task and dedicated a great deal of lesson time to explanation and introduction before sending the students to work independently, thereby minimizing independent work time and opportunities for students, particularly for higher achieving students, to engage in rich, high level thinking and discussion with peers.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school's choice of curricula is aligned to the Common Core learning Standards and the instructional shifts, as reflected in data-driven academic tasks across grades and content areas, promoting college and career readiness for all students.

Impact

School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions to ensure that curricula are Common Core aligned, thus promoting college and career readiness for all learners. The school's curricular adjustments, and embedded tasks result in coherence across all grades.

Supporting Evidence

- The Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts are at the forefront of all the school's planning. Teachers in K-5 use programs such as: Reading Street, ReadyGen, Words Their Way, Foundations, Teachers College Writing, Junior Great Books, and GoMath!. Through extensive professional development, literacy skills and strategies have been integrated into the four major content areas in the curriculum. The school's continued instructional foci of working collaboratively to increase rigorous instruction and student engagement in literacy by developing foundational skills, participating in higher order discussions, and partaking in experience building activities result in coherence and provide the conceptual support for students to expand their thinking and become college and career ready.
- Every unit begins with a pre-assessment to measure individual and whole class prior knowledge, and inform curricula adjustments. Teachers then plan mini lessons, scaffolds, and form groups to drive instruction and engage all students according with student need. The New York City Scope and Sequence is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts in Social Studies and Science. Additionally the school ensures that there is a balance between fiction and non-fiction, compare and contrast ideas across texts genres, and text complexity. Moreover, students participate in close reading of complex texts for multiple purpose, text –based responses forming a claim with text evidence, common writing strategies and rubrics, discussions and debating protocols have been integrated to promote literacy across the content areas. A grade 4 Persuasive Writing unit '*The Tarantula Scientist*' includes essential questions asking, "*How does a reader consider point of view? How does a writer use experiences, narration, and description to compel a reader?*" thus, guiding students through gathering, evaluating, and collecting evidence from text to support their thinking and persuade the reader.
- Based on teacher team inquiry and analysis of Teacher's College Running Records for June 2015, the data revealed that 28% of kindergarten and 18% of grade 1 students were not reading on grade level and were not prepared for the transition to grade 3 and the rigorous testing program. Consequently, the school decided to target the students in first and second grade by utilizing small group instruction in Foundations and Fountas and Pinnell leveled literacy. Preliminary results indicate that 95% of the students are increasing their reading levels.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, instructional practices demonstrate the school's philosophy of how students learn best that purposefully offer all students access to the curricula, exposure to higher order thinking skills planned supports and challenging tasks.

Impact

School practices, including questioning and discussion techniques, scaffolds, turn and talks, and student-to-student interactions are evident across grades and subjects. However; strategic multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions into the curricula that reflect high levels of student thinking in student work products vary.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's beliefs on how students learn best is supported by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and supported by teachers' use of student data-analyses to understand students' academic needs, thereby developing appropriate individual and group goals. A review of all lesson plans for classrooms visited indicated that teachers employ structured lesson plans, a teaching point, use of differentiated groups based on assessment results, and teachers consistently use a rotation system of centers/stations when teaching reading and math to provide multiple entry points and meet the needs of each student in the classroom as evidenced during a grade 3 math classroom visit.
- Teachers utilize technology throughout the building to strengthen lessons, provide instant assessment, and on the spot data analysis to evaluate efficiency of a lesson, unit or topic as demonstrated by a grade 4 teacher.
- Teachers plan lessons and use scaffolds to provide multiple entry points into instruction in response to students' needs, so that all students are engaged and have access into lessons. Through more pivotal type questions teachers bring out the content so that all students including English language learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities (SWDs), have an entry point into the higher order thinking. The use of word walls across classrooms helps all students build their vocabulary, charts and tangible students' manipulatives also provide students with support in this area.

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

Distributed leadership structures are in place so that staff has a voice in school-wide policies that affect student learning across the school. Additionally, shared leadership has yielded a culture where staff feels their expertise is valued, thus empowering them.

Impact

A focus on analysis of data, shared responsibilities, and shared leadership, is resulting in strong reflection and improved instructional practices.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers collaborate in professional teams 3-5 times per week in addition to the Monday 80-minute session. Teams meet across grades and cross grades. They utilize this time to engage in looking at student work, reviewing student data, development and evaluation of common assessment and implementing school-wide instructional practices, embedding school-wide goals, instructional shifts and Common Core Standards to continuously promote improved achievement for all learners. During a Grade 4 math teacher team meeting, teachers used a protocol to examine GoMath! Pre-assessments results. During the meeting, the team facilitator introduced and presented the topic, set norms, and used the Connections protocol to engage the teachers in the work. Teachers engaged in low inference observations, shared reflections, identified possible instructional implications and decided on next steps, for the grade. Consequently, professional collaborations encourage strategic decision making, helps build teacher capacity, engage all staff in meaningful work and support the improvement of student achievement as evidenced by GoMath! data reviewed for Grade 3 and Grade 4 Pre and Post assessments results that indicate that 90% of students are making gains.
- Administration and teacher leaders are able to identify distributed leadership structures that are deeply rooted in the school's day-to-day operations. For example, teacher leaders within grades or content areas have been identified to attend outside professional development opportunities, be mentored by school leaders in order to leverage their expertise with their colleagues within their grade or content. Using the school's model of distributed leadership, teachers' demonstrating expertise in identified areas and have demonstrated the ability to foster collegiality and motivate teachers support the instructional foci by providing professional development to 5 teams of 10-11 teachers during the Monday 80 minute block as evidenced by a review of the professional development plan. Additionally, a new initiative allows for all resources to be shared with all grades via Google Drive, which has changed and improved the way teachers collaborate by adding a technology component as teachers can now view resources from anywhere with a digital device
- The Response to Intervention team is a clear example of teacher leadership that illustrates how teachers and teacher leaders play a vital role in school-level decision-making. The Rtl team meets several times per month to review individual students who are performing below grade level academically, or need social-emotional support services resulting in in a plan created for each student. During the Rtl team meeting, the results from an intervention were discussed and another plan of action was created for a special education student. Preliminary results indicate that the interventions provided ensure the students' needs are met.