



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 214 Cadwallader Colden

Elementary School Q214

**31-15 140 Street
Queens
NY 11354**

Principal: Denise Fuccillo

**Date of review: December 15, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

The School Context

P.S. 214 Cadwallader Colden is an elementary school with 566 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 65% Asian, 5% Black, 25% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 15% English Language Learners and 11% students with disabilities. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 96.3%.

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	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	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	Proficient

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 supporting rigor in the classroom, for all students including students with disabilities and ELLs.

Impact

Engaging curricula and purposeful questioning techniques promote rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills across the majority of classrooms. Purposeful decisions aligning curricula result in coherence that supports extensions for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty have engaged in a rigorous process of curriculum development aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Unit plans indicate that they closely meet the needs of individual students, using rigorous content, critical thinking and problem solving skills. A component of *The Writing Revolution* specifically for the writing process is utilized that aligns with the Common Core, *ReadyGen* and *Go Math!* programs.
- Multiple entry points are embedded in all unit plans addressing the needs of students with disabilities and the English Language Learners (ELLs). In addition to *Go Math!*, instructional teams have implemented a questioning and discourse protocol in math in order to study specific student work. There is consistent focus on academic vocabulary and coherence in math concepts. Modifications are made to all units of study to address gaps in student understanding. All curricula maps and supporting resources are archived in the schools' Team214 Dropbox account for teachers to reference. Thus, teachers may use multi-grade maps to provide scaffolding and rigorous activities for each grade level. As a result of the focus on curricula monitoring and modification, the specific needs of learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are addressed across all subjects and grades.
- Teachers review the curricula based on the trends revealed by careful analysis of student work. Interim data provides additional information leading to further revisions of the curriculum. The school utilizes Teachers College writing methodologies for English Language Arts (ELA). This program includes the use of complex texts with a focus on key standards such as, annotating for details and evidence. There is coherence across grades and subjects. Customized *ReadyGen* summative assessment tasks, which use common core aligned, grade specific rubrics for ELA, indicate that scaffolding and enrichment components for all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are consistently incorporated.
- Grade curricula units in science and social studies are blended with the *ReadyGen* program. There is a focus on strategies that solidify the coherence of what is taught, providing multiple entry points, scaffolding, higher order skills and rigorous habits for all learners. The *Scaffolded Strategies Handbook* is used as a guide to support students in their work.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions into the curricula for all students.

Impact

These teaching practices ensure that all learners are engaged in challenging tasks that enable them to demonstrate higher order thinking and active learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Students across grades demonstrate competency in literacy by completing performance tasks focusing on both fiction and non-fiction reading, writing, speaking and listening. Assignments are 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 students with disabilities and ELLs.
- Across classrooms, students participated in class discussions by responding to both teacher and student generated questions. Students not only answered questions, but asked questions and extended their own thinking and that of their peers by providing examples from the text or their discussions to support their contributions. In some 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 the think-pair-share portion of the lesson, as well as in whole class discussions. In a kindergarten class, the students were participating in a picture walk with the assignment to identify the character and setting from the story, *Come on Rain*. Students worked in groups to discuss what they discovered, define specific vocabulary, and describe the story from beginning to end.
- Lessons had multiple entry points embedded both in the plans and in the classroom practice. Student groups were flexible, depending on the need to challenge all learners. Students were observed working with great effort when sharing with their peers. In a math class, students were asked to do multi-step problems and share out explanations with each other using reason and evidence. Teachers used visuals, leveled texts, and a variety of graphic organizers assuring varied scaffolds. Flexible groupings in most classes included remedial, on-level, and enrichment groups.
- A review of observation data showed alignment to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Visitations take place at other schools to observe best practices across grades and subject areas. The school uses *Advance*, the teacher evaluation and development system. The school's goal is to promote student ownership of questioning and discussion, as well as their taking initiative in partner and whole-class discussions. There are four gifted and talented classes where rigorous extension learning activities are provided for those students who are talented learners in the school.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Assessment, including common assessments and ongoing checks for understanding, are aligned to the schools curricula.

Impact

Teachers assess student learning resulting in targeted interventions, varied scaffolds and shared instructional planning to meet all students learning needs, including ELLS and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- The school administration and faculty review student work products to inform instruction and develop supports and extensions for all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs. Curricula maps provide evidence that the school is embedding the use of assessment and on-going checks for understanding into their lesson planning. There is continuity across the grades with common rubrics and checklists to assist teachers.
- Across grades and subject areas, teachers employ visuals, leveled texts and a variety of graphic organizers assuring varied experiences for students, in order to meet the school's high standard of assessment gathering. Teachers use checklists to gather information about students' progress during lessons as well as conferencing notes, stop and jot and hands up by students for assessing on the spot student learning. Teacher teams engage in bi-monthly analysis of student work using an inquiry protocol to ensure alignment to the units of study. State data and item analysis of school examinations leads to curriculum adjustments. Data is collected school wide and examined by the administration to monitor the impact of learning and plan for future professional development. As a result, teachers created a data-based instructional planning guide incorporating strategies, activities to continue, curriculum map modification, and modifications to support continued growth. In addition, current class strengths and areas of need are documented within the form and used to prepare lessons with higher-order depth of knowledge questions embedded.
- All teachers work with an in-house literacy coach focusing on the development of feedback to enable the creation of interventions to assist students with disabilities and English Language Learners. Some teachers have specific language skills to provide academic intervention services to new ELL students. Students shared that they are aware of their reading levels and why rubrics are "important in their reading, writing and science classes." In a grade 2 English Language Arts lesson, students were working on different assignments using an editor's guideline. A self-assessment tool used by the students included feedback from prior writing samples. Students referenced their writing plans with the former feedback and then discussed ways with the table group to improve their plans. Several feedback forms referenced transition or linking words and focusing on details. The school has supplemented the curricula to meet the needs of all learners by adding the use of informational text and literary genres in leveled texts and translations. Teachers stated that they are seeing improvements in student writing, a deeper understanding of content, and explanations of claims using text based evidence throughout the school.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

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

Impact

All members of the school community clearly articulate that expectations are high and this is supported by a culture of mutual accountability for teaching and learning that permeates the environment. The entire faculty and staff successfully partner with families to support this student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations for learning and positive character traits are communicated to the entire school community. Input from teachers and families positively impacts the initiatives, curriculum decisions, and special programs that support student success. Structures and systems that communicate these expectations are connected to college and career readiness. There is a successful partnership with families to support those expectations. The school established communication systems such as Blackboard Connect and Remind, to inform parents and students. Home-school connections include subscriptions to IXL, Raz-Kids and ThinkCentral. In the teacher team meetings it was shared that the support of administration, and their colleagues, strengthens a common language and provides a strong culture for learning within the school community.
- When interviewed students were able to articulate their readiness for their next level and the goals they have as they move forward. Students stated that the principal holds a meeting with all students and teachers in the gym every morning to “set the day and motivate everyone”. Rigor has been defined as challenging children to think at high levels and to expose students to grade level text, both fiction and non-fiction aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards in conjunction with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* guideline for questioning techniques. Teachers work collaboratively towards ensuring high expectations through daily instructional practices using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.
- Parents readily shared that they appreciated the school’s constant communication regarding their child’s progress via email, phone calls and in-person meetings. In addition, 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 stated clearly. “A school is judged NOT by the way it treats its most successful learners but by the way it takes care of all its learners,” is the principal’s favorite reminder. Students are recognized for their academic achievement and exemplary citizenship. They understand that these qualities enhance the goals of college and career paths for all students.
- School leaders provide clear expectations for pedagogical and professional practice via verbal and written communication. Expectations include that every student will graduate with the skills and knowledge reflective of a strong and engaging learning environment. Students have a voice in planning clubs, trips and other opportunities tailored to their individual needs. The Danielson *Framework for Teaching* is used to communicate high expectations related to preparation and planning, the learning environment and classroom instruction.

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

Teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributive 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 capacity to improve student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Many teachers serve as leaders. Distributive leadership structures include teacher-led professional development sessions, teacher-created curriculum units and setting schedules for inter-visitations and peer collaborations. Teacher teams across grades are working together to plan lessons aligned to the Common Core, and generate text dependent questions to reinforce students' habits. Referring to text for evidence and developing critical thinking skills was evidenced in lesson plans and promoted through teacher planning. Common language, alignment to practices in the rubrics, and analysis of student results at the end of tasks were observed in many classes.
- Teacher Teams participate in planning, inquiry and professional development meetings to facilitate increased expertise in pedagogy. Topics that have been addressed include implementing the Common Core Learning Standards and The Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, as well as, Webb's *Depth of Knowledge*. Common preparation periods have been programmed for all grades with a minimum of two periods for each teacher to allow for grade planning, examination of student work and the sharing of best practices. Interesting questions such as "What am I going to try out in my classroom" and "What can I use involving multiple entry points" were discussed. Teacher team meetings are focused around the analysis of student work to promote increased student achievement. For example, at the fourth grade meeting, teachers adjusted the task rubric to include identifying story elements, determined to be a weak skill across all classrooms. Instructional modifications are decided upon collaboratively. At the fourth grade meeting a significant amount of work was covered on modifying and scaffolding story packets for students. These revisions will be implemented in future grade 4 lessons.
- Teachers are working collaboratively toward ensuring quality teaching. High expectations are incorporated into their daily instructional practices. Teachers shared due to the professional development opportunities resulting from team meetings they now have more interest in working across grades to better meet the needs of students. During one meeting, the team was analyzing student work to understand the actual learning outcomes. Their reflections led to their planning additional scaffolding for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Meeting agendas indicate a consistent practice of reviewing student work pieces that lead to lesson adjustments resulting in improved student performance.