



Quality Review Report

2015-2016

PS 354

Elementary School Q354

**126-10 Bedell Street
Queens
NY 11434**

Principal: Raevan Askew

**Date of review: January 22, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Terrell**

The School Context

PS 354 is an elementary school with 631 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 90% Black, 6% Hispanic, and 0% White students. The student body includes 3% English Language Learners and 18% students with disabilities. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 93.3%.

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	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 strategically integrate the instructional shifts with an interdisciplinary approach across the curricula and refine tasks to support all students in having access to the curricular.

Impact

As a result of an interdisciplinary curriculum, students' work reflects the use of academic language across grades and subjects. Refined student tasks allow all students to apply real world connections to their work across the curriculum to support cognitive engagement through project-based tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- A Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) based curricula provides a strategic focus on interdisciplinary project based learning (PBL) across subjects that are aligned to the instructional shifts and common core standards. In grades 2 to 5, the school uses Pearson's Reading Street for English Language Arts (ELA) to ensure that all students are engaged in "close" reading activities with informational and literary texts. The principal states that the decision to select this curricular was based on an analysis of students' data and to support a more fluid coherence for students entering grade 3. In grades kindergarten to grade 1, students use Superkids to support a strong foundation in decoding. A review of the math curricula led school leaders to implement the Envision math program across all grades to provide students with greater opportunities to engage in problem solving and college readiness skills.
- Across classrooms, students engage in hands-on interdisciplinary approaches to learning. For example, in an upper grade class students integrated science, math and ELA in a PBL assignment, while working on a science curriculum unit on "Survival". The students had to use math to design a dwelling to survive a natural disaster. The unit tasks required the students to discuss the materials they would use and the density needed to survive a natural disaster. Students were also required to use technology to research the impact of erosion on their structure. This work has resulted in more fluency around showing their work in solving math problems and real world connections for college and careers.
- As a result of a review of the summative math data, school leaders incorporated the "genius hour" into the school week to support students' proficiency across the curriculum. For example, every Monday, during period 3, students are provided choice in engaging in hand-on teacher lead activities. Students complete a form to participate in developing writing skills such as poetry, writing lyrics to music, Reader' Theatre, working in the Bedell Buck-A-Roo Store to improve math skills or the chess club to support problem solving skills. Specific students are selected to participate in the Saturday program for math, where students are engaged in refined tasks aligned to their instructional levels.
- The curriculum has been refined to provide multiple tasks to engage students in writing across the curricula. For example, students use graphic organizers to respond to text for the question, "What do you think the author means when he says that teachers were a 'prized possession for a community?" The grade 5 math curriculum has been revised to support a departmentalization of students and support higher order student engagement. Students are streamed so that they have more time to work on tasks at their instructional levels.

Area of Focus

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

Teacher teams are organized across every grade and continue to conduct professional inquiry to determine students' academic needs and specific next steps. Teams share a voice in decisions to support increased student achievement.

Impact

Teacher's instructional practices are consistently informed by an analysis of students' work and data; this has typically improved strategies to push students' academic performance. Leadership structures support decision making to improve students' learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, teachers have organized grade wide professional inquiry teams. Teams analyze multiple forms of students' data to determine areas of need and teaching strategies. For example, the grade 4 team has been engaged in evaluating students' writing. They shared that students are responding to the questions, however they are not providing specific evidence to support their answer. This has led to the use of graphic organizers and checklists and task cards with specific questions for students to use as resources to support the development of more detailed writing samples.
- Each teacher is rotated to the role of facilitator on a monthly basis. Teachers state that they have a voice in selecting curricular for their students. For example, the lower grade teachers advocated for the Super Kids program to teach literacy, over Reading Street. The principal accepted their input and purchased the program for grades K-1. Teachers shared that the inquiry work they engage in is guiding best classroom practices for their students, however, while there is a vertical team comprised of representatives from each grade team and a staff developer, there is not always ongoing opportunities to articulate with the grade above and the grade below on trends they have identified on their grade, in order to support greater coherence of expectations in students' work and shared improvements in teacher practice for the sixteen teachers new to the school, in their efforts to promote mastery of goals for all students.
- When asked what their goals were during the students' meeting, students stated, "To be the best I can be." "To be the valedictorian" "To move up one reading level" and one student shared, "To add more details to my writing. Teachers shared that they developed goals with their students in September, however they tended to be broad based. Although students receive feedback on their work in the form of 'glows and grows', they are not able to articulate specific their next steps. Teachers continue to help students narrow their goals through a review of data and individual conferences, in order to move toward more explicit next steps.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school has an articulated belief on how students learn best that is aligned to the *Danielson Framework for Teaching* and instructional shifts. All students are work in groups with differentiated tasks.

Impact

As a result of leveled teaching strategies that are geared to support students at their instructional levels, students work products and tasks reflect grade appropriate challenges.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has articulated that she believes that students learn best in small groups with hands on opportunities to navigate their thinking in centers. Teachers reiterated this philosophy when asked how they believe students learn best. The school uses the workshop model to provide opportunities for students to work independently at “application” stations while the classroom teacher provides guided instruction to a small group of students.
- Across all classroom students worked in small groups. In a third grade classroom students were observed working in small groups with manipulatives to construct fractional equations for a math problem. One group took blue masking tape to map out a picture on the floor of the math problem. Students used academic vocabulary such as numerator and denominator to identify parts of the whole. In a kindergarten ICT class, one group of students were using rice in a pan to construct the letter “Ff” with their fingers. In a first grade class one group of students were using play dough to create shapes. The students were using a checklist to check for the attributes of the shapes they were making. Students used the word “vortex” to describe the pointed sides of a triangle. In a grade 5 class, the teacher led a whole group discussion about health policies and the impact that diabetes have on our health and the foods we eat. The students used prompts such as “I agree with ...” or “I don’t agree...” In small groups, the students worked together to write a proposal to the question, “What policy would you propose to the school to help Joey make better choices?” The students’ task required them to use their iPad to research various suggestions to support their proposal on how to combat the negative effects of an unhealthy lifestyle. The final task required the students to write an essay with supporting evidence to support their opinion on the policy they created.
- In another classroom, students’ engaged in differentiated interdisciplinary tasks around a math problem. The students were presented questions around making a strawberry shortcake for the teacher’s birthday. Each of three groups had specific questions aligned to data to support their instructional level. The task required the students to draw an equation to represent their understanding of each of four multiple-choice answers. Another task require the students to write an argument to justify their position on the following statement, “Madison says the amount of strawberries is greater than the amount of milk.”

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers use a variety of summative and formative assessments aligned to the school's curricula. Common assessments are used to determine adjustments to the curricula.

Impact

An analysis of assessment results informs curricular adjustments and provides actionable feedback to students to target their next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide a school wide grading policy for all students. The policy is aligned to the curricular and provides students with written expectations of grade level proficiency. Students exceeding proficiency at level 4 are expected to maintain student work at 100-96%. Level 3 proficiency is maintained at 95-80. Students approaching proficiency are at Level 2 with work rated between 79 – 65%. Students far below grade level standards are rated at Level 1 with work between 1 – 64%. In addition, teachers use running records, rubrics, state assessments, MOSL base line data as well as I Ready diagnostic test results to determine students' instructional levels and provide actionable feedback. For example, feedback to a grade 5 student on a narrative essay stated the "glow" as the use of voice in the writing and descriptive details. Feedback for the "grow" was to write in the past tense when making a journal entry and to use more dialogue to strengthen the writing.
- Data from formative and summative assessments are disaggregated to discern school wide trends. One of the trends noted from an analysis of summative data is the need for more details in students' constructed writing responses, and strategies to support students in math fluency. The curricula has been modified with the inclusion of task cards with specific questions to support students in rendering more details in their writing samples. Math has been incorporated into tasks across content areas. For example, an assignment on Colonial America required the students to incorporate math problems.
- Common assessments in the form of normed rubrics, student check-lists and performance based assessment for end of unit analysis allow teachers to build common expectations for students' performance and to leverage instructional strategies to increase students' achievement. Students in a kindergarten class were observed working in a partnership. Each partner took turns using a flashlight to give a glow comment and a flower to provide a grow comment. Pictures on the kindergarten check list supported the students in articulating the glow and grow feedback.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high standards to the staff that are aligned to the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*. Families are provided ongoing communications connected to college and careers.

Impact

Teachers design interdisciplinary lessons across content areas and families are able to follow the progress of their children and partner with the school to support students' achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal and assistant principal consistently conduct walkthroughs to observe classroom teaching practices. The low inference data is shared with teachers to support the implementation of student centered learning activities. For example, feedback to teacher informs them to push their students in order to engage them in more cognitive discussions and to challenge critical thinking skills as they apply their learning in the applications stations.
- Teachers are provided ongoing training from Teachers College on implementing an interdisciplinary STEM curriculum. The staff is conducting a book study on effective lesson planning to support student engagement and cognitive development. Teachers do inter-visitations to observe specific strategies that can be used in their classroom. The "genius" period is built into the weekly schedule to allow teachers to increase their repertoire of teaching strategies. In addition, the principal conducts a monthly Principal's "Lunch Bruch" to share school wide learning expectations across the school and sends a weekly newsletter to the staff to highlight the instructional focus for the week.
- Families are provided access to an online account to Pupil Path, a tool that allows parents and guardians to track their children's progress towards grade level standards for college and career readiness skills. Parents shared that they can email their children's teachers if they need to resolve an issue or get a missed homework assignment. A Parent Handbook outlines the STEM curricular and standards for students' achievement and social behavior. Additionally, the monthly newsletter, *The Bedell Street Bugle* is backpacked to all families. It includes a message from the principal, and each grade provides a unit preview of the activities their children will be engaged in during the month across subject areas.
- Parents raved about the Family ARTS Night, in which they were able to engage in origami and other art activities with their child. Family Fun Nights aligned to the STEM curricula allow parents to engage in activities with their children and learn strategies that they can use at home to support the connection to college and career readiness skills. Parents have participated in, The Family Math Night, which allowed parents to engage in developing math fluency skills through games with their children. The Family Reading Night provided strategies for parents to help their children read across the content areas and Family Science Night provide to engage in science activities with their children. The parent coordinator facilitates the Fathers and Mentors Program to engage more fathers in their child's education. Weekly after school Tuesday parent engagement sessions provide opportunities for parents to discuss specific concerns with their child's teachers.