



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

The Woodside Community School

Elementary School Q361

**39-07 57th Street
Queens
NY 11377**

Principal: Nayeon Hwang

**Date of review: May 10, 2016
Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth**

The School Context

The Woodside Community School is an elementary school with 124 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade kindergarten. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 35% Asian, 1% Black, 56% Hispanic, and 5% White students. The student body includes 19% English Language Learners and 10% 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 is not available due to the new school status.

School Quality Criteria

| Instructional Core | | |
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| <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 | Proficient |
| 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 | 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 | Proficient |

Area of Celebration

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| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide training. Additionally, school leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness and successfully partner with families.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability exists to further high expectations for staff while ensuring families are provided supports to further their child's progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Building leadership and staff communicate high expectations amongst themselves and with families through a variety of approaches, including: workshops, handbooks, professional development, and the "Secret Superheroes" initiative, with the three R's: rigor, relevance, and relationships. Student, staff and parent expectations have been established and communicated regarding rigor, relevance, and relationships (superhero initiative attributes). For rigor, expectations include all school community personnel thinking critically as they explore their individual curiosities. For example, students are expected to explore areas of unique interest, which may lead to their placement in an academy within the school. Relevance is defined as working through real-life challenges, such as how staff members remain resilient to continuously evaluate and improve their current practices. Mid-year conference forms reflect teacher's identifying areas of growth and specific next steps. Lastly, relationships refer to how collaboration and celebration occur within the school community to support student achievement. For example, for parents to offer positive help and support children by actively playing the role of supporter, encourager, monitor, and model, training is offered for families to understand what this looks like.
- A core value shared by both staff and building leadership includes the recognition that each child is provided rigorous instruction that supports their strengths, interests, and needs. Performance outcomes presented during professional development sessions include a clear and purposeful demonstration of student's critical thinking skills, creativity in problem solving, and communication. One form of furthering expectations of the core values is through the establishment of academies and advisory. All staff is trained and involved in the academies and advisory roles to support students and their family's engagement with inquiry and project-based learning to prepare the students to be tomorrow's leaders. Families, in addition to the modified student friendly online survey, completed an interest survey so they could contribute to their child's progress and placement within the academies.
- A variety of parent workshops are offered by the building staff and the Parent Teacher Association. Several workshop topics include literacy, differentiation, small group instruction, and how to help their child at home. Attendance at most of the workshops is at capacity. Parents felt, "in general it is a collaboration and parents are encouraged to speak up in public and private," "it is like a family," and "it isn't them just telling us stuff, it is genuine." Parents further shared they are made fully aware of their child's progress through newsletters, teacher communications and "we work as a team collaboratively and talk about everything," including the child in student-led conferences.

Area of Focus

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| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best with work products and discussions.

Impact

Instruction is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts is reflected in high levels of student thinking and participation, although student ownership of their learning could be furthered through continued efforts.

Supporting Evidence

- A core set of beliefs how students learn best held by both teachers and school leadership include, instruction based around the workshop model, students reading at their own levels, and grouping to best support student learning, partner work, and discussions. The workshop model was observed throughout most classes where students, warmed up, engaged in a mini-lesson, performed some independent work, and shared out. For example, kindergarten students in an English Language Arts class sat appropriately during a read aloud while the teacher modeled matching the feelings of the poem with their voice intonation. Several student examples were also modeled before the students were encouraged to “go ahead and try using your feelings” independently. Although students had choice of their poem selection, it was not evident that they were able to express why they chose it or if they could fully understand its content. In another class, pre-kindergarten students were seated on the floor with the teacher to measure a beanstalk with a variety of standards-based math tools, such as big and little feet. During the modeling discussion, the teacher asked many questions for the students to reflect on with their partner, although few questions were proposed by the students themselves.
- Students across classes had many opportunities to engage in conversation with peers and share what they knew and understood, however, opportunities for them to further their understanding and explore were often limited by the rigor of the task and explicit teacher direction. For example, during a science lesson, students were directed to cite text based evidence of important content from several pages read, although students were modeled the expectations and had an opportunity to discuss their thinking, the writing on sticky-notes did not align to their findings. In another class, students turned and talked with their partner following a series of prompted questions from the teacher. Students were paired up, including a recent English as a New Language (ENL) learner who was purposefully paired with a peer who spoke the same native language. Although discussion opportunities were present, additional resources did not appear to provide access for the ENL student to ensure his comprehension.
- Instruction in some classes included supports for differentiation including varied text, choice of centers, choice of reading and scaffolds to increase student thinking. For example in one class, students were provided differentiated procedural expectations and checklists to guide them through the task. Another example includes a math lesson where three simultaneously tiered tasks were used to instruct students with their understanding of multiples of ten. The use of differentiated tasks provided opportunities for students to have high levels of thinking and participation, however not all classes offered similar techniques.

Additional Findings

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| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills.

Impact

The coherence and promotion of college and career readiness and rigorous habits are emphasized for all students across grades and content areas, including English Language Learners (ELL's) and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- To fully align the curriculum with guided instruction, school leaders and staff adopted curriculum aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards, including units of study from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program and *GO Math!*. These resources were selected for their support of students needs in small group workshop models. Additionally, the curriculum resources have been identified and developed with an emphasis on checks for understanding and differentiation. A review of several curriculum planning documents showcases the inclusion of a mini-lesson with a connection, teaching moment and active involvement component. For example, a lesson intended to guide students through an understanding of what it means to add more details in their writing similar to good writers, includes teaching words that the writer would want the reader to pay special attention to prior to the high-leveled rigorous independent work.
- A “Flow of the Day” was generated to guide the instructional shifts in both pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. Teachers use the “Flow of the Day” to pace the workshop model of instruction with their planning. For example, all teachers have defined expectations related to arrival, morning meeting, center time, read aloud, outdoor play, story time, music, rest, and, other such related activities intended to maximize a student’s experience.
- Many lesson plan documents include planning for tiered instruction. For example, one ELA lesson plan identifies approaching, on-level, and, enrichment groups as having similar content, but varied techniques and tasks to complete. Similarly, a math lesson plan, identifies the same groups, each with a different expected outcome all based on the same teaching point and Common Core Learning Standard. Additionally, weekly homework forms are generated for students with differentiated assignments based on their reading level. Parents shared they appreciate the differentiated homework and were a key influence in the establishment of that as a practice.
- Thinking maps are a core tool used to engage students in learning and used by teachers to plan their lesson groupings, questions, and activities for assignments. For example, teachers have identified when they would use a circle map to brainstorm or define a term as opposed to a bridge map to identify analogies. For example, a pre-kindergarten lesson plan includes a center using a circle map where students will identify which produce is a vegetable or fruit.

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| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and, grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Additionally, the school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subjects.

Impact

Actionable feedback and assessment results are provided to students and teachers regarding student achievement and the results are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are using progress monitoring tools and data trackers to collect information regarding their students’ progress and use the information to support instruction. For example, a teacher noticed her students were struggling with comparing and contrasting so she used a thinking map to help vocabulary brainstorming and developed a word bank.
- According to school leaders and staff, an assessment plan is in place “for learning, rather than of learning.” Moreover, school leaders and staff agree their goal is to use assessment for monitoring student learning and acquire feedback to improve instructional practices and student achievement. A series of seven teacher strategies have been established for learning including: teach students to self-assess and set goals, teach students to self-reflect on their own progress, and offer regular descriptive feedback regarding what the student is doing right, as well as, what to work on in the form of “glows and grows.” The assessment plan also includes learning targets aligned to the grading policies on a daily level, unit level, and measured by performance outcomes.
- Teachers collect information during instruction using checklists to determine a student’s level of proficiency. For example, during a lesson regarding the theme of the environment and me, the teacher determined if student’s knowledge of what water does was proficient or in need of improvement by asking five specific questions, each associated with a grade specific Common Core Learning Standard. Another quick check recording sheet, included the student’s response with a content driven activity as an assessment. Most teachers were observed or were able to provide their assessment checklists and tracking sheets regarding how they use common assessments to determine student progress and then use the information to adjust instruction.
- Rubrics and information writing checklists are used by all students in their classes. Several of the rubrics have been made more student friendly to include images and age appropriate language so they better understand the content.
- Common assessments are administered to students in several content areas to determine their progress throughout the year and analyzed for instructional grouping. For example, *GO Math!* results from the beginning of the year (BOY) assessment to the mid-year (MOY) assessment show a significant improvement in the number of students who performed at a Level 1 to 2, 3, and or 4. Specifically, one Integrated Co-Teaching class had all 24 students at a Level 1 on the BOY and 4, 4, 6, and 7 students perform at a Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively on the MOY. Other classes had similar results. School-wide and individual assessment results are collected using other data such as *Fountas and Pinnell* (reading level). The data is used strategically to group students, develop interventions, and, assign homework.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Additionally, distributed leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership.

Impact

The instructional capacity of teachers has been strengthened through inquiry practices and they play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers engage in an inquiry cycle process where they discuss approaches to improve instruction and outcomes for specific groups of students. For example, teachers shared reviewing data and inquiry discussions have led to the implementation of more interventions for students within their class with differentiated and targeted assigned reading to promote literacy. Additionally, teachers have normed their differentiated strategies purposefully so “it looks similar” across classes. As a result, teachers have seen growth, especially among students who were “lagging behind” and brought all students on-level in the areas of phonemic, fluency, and comprehension awareness.
- Teachers regularly meet to promote student achievement and their understanding of the Common Core Learning Standards. A review of inquiry meeting documents, highlight intervention plans specific to tier II students in kindergarten based on assessment data addressing literacy standards. A formal protocol for examining the data has been adopted from the National School Reform Faculty to guide their meetings. Steps include, identification of data, what the data does and does not tell, celebrations, identification of problems of practice, and key conclusions and recommendations for addressing the problems of practice. A recent inquiry team meeting identified the problem of practice as, “What strategies can we implement in order for our students to transfer their knowledge of letter sounds to authentic independent reading and writing?” At the closure of the meeting, next steps identified included implementation of partnership conferencing and strategies to “turn checklists into something more manageable for all students and tie it to the problem of practice.”
- All teachers play an integral role as leaders through the promotion of key decisions in the first year of the school’s opening as it establishes curriculum, academic norms, assessment tools, and professional development. Teachers have brought professional resources for inclusion in pedagogy to their colleagues through training and modeling. For example, curriculum connections and resources for pre-kindergarten were shared by one teacher related to establishment of the cool culture initiative. Another teacher attended several Teacher’s College workshops to support literacy through reading and writing, and shared with her grade level colleagues. Teachers expressed they “have a very loud voice in running committees...so we have a key voice,” including the hiring of new staff.