Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 030 Westerleigh

Elementary School R030

200 Wardwell Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10314

Principal: Alan Ihne

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Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio

The School Context

P.S. 030 Westerleigh is an elementary school with 784 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Asian, 2% Black, 23% Hispanic, and 66% White students. The student body includes 6% English Language Learners and 23% students with disabilities. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 94.5%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**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 Framework for Teaching, 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		
To what extent does the school…	**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		
To what extent does the school…	**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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide support towards them through professional development and other structures. The school staff effectively communicates high expectations through a variety of structures to families to help them understand their children's progress towards national standards.

Impact
School-wide communication structures result in a culture of mutual accountability with staff and partnerships with families that lead students toward expectations of college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders use emails and memoranda to communicate their expectations towards the instructional focus on formative assessment and student engagement. One memorandum provides information on the purpose of formative assessment and how it should be used, "to inform instruction, create grouping and differentiation and inform students of their current learning and progress."

- Teacher-led professional development is reflected on the school's support plan. A teacher-led book study group on *The Common Core Companion* provides teachers with tools to decode the standards in order to develop action plans for curricula adjustments using formative assessments. Teachers are required to construct an action plan to develop goals based on the specific standards of their choice and obtain input at each meeting by their collegial collaborators. Teachers are expected to bring their action plans to meetings for feedback and to serve as living documents with revisions as expectations are shared throughout the year.

- Parents shared that the school often provides them with information about their children's performance through progress reports, conversations with teachers and online tools. In addition, some online tools serve as tutorials where parents can view their children's progress from home and provide assistance as needed. Family Night and curriculum conferences serve as a means to provide parents with information of grade-level expectations as they relate to the Common Core Learning Standards. Parents indicated these conferences as well as a combination of meetings with teachers, progress reports and assessments that are sent home provide insight of how their child is performing and areas to provide further support. One parent reported that after reviewing her child's progress report and being provided with additional tools by the teacher, she was able to help her son with his writing. Similarly, other parents reported how the information and tools sent home were helpful in supporting their children.

- Programs such as Learning Leaders enable parents to provide instructional support with students throughout the day. Parents volunteer to conduct small group instruction and book studies in the library with students.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
The use of questioning and scaffolds are consistently utilized as multiple entry points but do not yet serve as high-quality supports and extensions in student discussion and work products for the vast majority of classrooms.

Impact
The lack of ownership in student discussions and work products has led to all students not yet consistently demonstrating higher order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers provided scaffolds such as graphic organizers and manipulatives to different groups of students. In a grade 5 lesson, the students were provided fraction strips and the teacher used a video to model how to solve equivalent fractions. Similarly, in a grade 1 math lesson, the teacher used unifix cubes and a video to model how to add doubles plus one.

- In a grade 3 science class, students were asked to determine whether the objects provided could be magnetized. Each group was provided with different graphic organizers, tasks and materials to determine how and why the items used were magnetic. Across the entire room, each group of students shared with a partner or the group, made a hypothesis and used tier 3 vocabulary such as “repel” and “force”. During a share out, students were asked to share why a set of bottle caps stuck together when magnetized and respond in agreement or challenge the peer’s response. One student stated that the reason why the caps stuck together was due to the fact that “the magnetic force spreads to all of the caps” allowing them to stick together when attached to the magnet. However, in a grade 5 math class, students worked in pairs or groups to solve equivalent fractions. Although many students responded correctly, some were not provided with word problems to challenge their thinking and continued to respond to the questions that were provided to the whole class.

- In a grade 1 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) English Language Arts (ELA) class, students were organized into groups based on their ability. In one group, students used question cards with prompts aligned to Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) level 3 such as “If you could change the story, what other tricks would you have Buck and Pup do and why?” to help guide the discussion of the story. The students led the conversation within their groups and shared their agreements and disagreements with each other based on the level of responses on their own without teacher prompting. This level of response was aligned to grade 2 standards. However, in a kindergarten writing class, students were asked to practice writing the letter “x” on a worksheet independently with one child in the front acting as “the teacher guide” for students. Although the child was asked to serve as a guide, the child worked independently as well as the other students and was not used to taking a lead in the class.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
The school curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards, integrate the instructional shifts, and emphasize rigor for all students.

Impact
Purposeful decision making has led to rigorous tasks and promotes college and career readiness across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has adopted *Core Knowledge* for their ELA curricula. Previously, the upper grades used *Expeditionary Learning* as their main curricula but staff felt it was not meeting the needs of their school community. Currently, all grades use *Core Knowledge* and in the upper grades, *Expeditionary Learning* is used to supplement the curricula. In addition, the school uses *Envision Math* and *FOSS* for science. In social studies, teacher-created curriculum maps reflect themes aligned to the New York City scope and sequence and integrate components from *Core Knowledge*. All curriculum maps are placed in an online tool for all teachers to utilize for planning purposes and they align with the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards for each grade.

- Lesson plans and tasks reflect a focus on specific instructional shifts such as fluency, deep understanding, and application for math. In a grade 2 lesson plan, the task requires students to add two digit numbers and explain how patterns on a hundred chart can be used to solve the problem while developing mental math strategies and their number sense. In a grade 1 lesson plan, students are required to determine the relationships between two like numbers to solve basic addition facts and provide real world examples in the form of word problems using this concept. In ELA, instructional shifts were reflected in tasks where students have to use text-based evidence to describe characters, settings and major events in a story and be able to articulate their responses to their peers.

- A review of curricula maps and lesson plans reflect the use of DOK level 3 tasks across subject areas. In social studies, a grade 4 curriculum map reflects essential questions such as “How did trade contribute to the development of the middle class and medieval towns?” In a grade 1 science astronomy curriculum map, questions include, “Why is the sun important?” and “How do astronomers learn about the universe?” For grade 1, essential math questions include, “How does adding the values of digits produce the total value of the number?” and “How can you use tens and ones models to represent a number in different ways?”

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and create assessments aligned to the curricula. Ongoing checks for understanding and self-assessments are used to determine student understanding of concepts.

Impact
School-wide assessment practices lead to effective adjustments and actionable feedback to support students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses pre and post assessments from school-wide curricula from *Core Knowledge* and *Envisions Math*. Across all content areas, teachers have developed rubrics using the standards as a guide to develop success criteria. The school uses an online tool to capture the information from assessments for the purpose of planning. In addition, shifts in the grading policy from performance levels to percentages have occurred to provide clarity to student performance for teachers, parents and students.

- Students are provided with feedback in the form of strengths and areas of improvement with next steps across all content areas. During an interview, students demonstrated their understanding of how to use rubrics to determine their grade and shared how this aligned to their content goals such as "I am a level Y in reading and need to get to a level Z in order to reach my goal by the end of the year". In addition, the students knew what next steps were needed in order for them to obtain a better grade based on their rubrics and teacher or peer feedback. One student said, "I need to quote more in my writing. My teacher showed me how to do that and now I understand what I need to do as well as how to explain my work more." Another student stated, "I need to work on my introductions and conclusions. My teacher gave me a graphic organizer to help me work on this." Other students responded similarly with regard to their teacher or peer feedback.

- Across classrooms, teachers used electronic tablets to record student performance on tasks during teacher-student conferences. In addition, teachers used questioning strategies to help students understand how to complete tasks where they demonstrated difficulty. In a grade 4 ICT class, one teacher worked with a student who had difficulty with a division problem to guide him toward understanding how to solve the problem. In addition, self-assessment during a grade 2 math lesson was demonstrated when a student realized he was solving the problem incorrectly in front of the class. In a grade 4 class, tablets were used to capture student responses to an exit slip on division. Teachers reported that they use their tablets to plan small groups in math for instructional purposes based on student understanding of tasks. A review of several work products reflects the use of checklists for self-reflection in writing.

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

Findings
The majority of teachers participate in grade-level inquiry-based professional collaborations aligned to school goals and the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributive leadership structures are in place to provide teachers with a voice in school decisions.

Impact
Grade-level professional collaborations lead to strengthening instructional capacity for teachers and curricula decisions that positively affect student learning outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet twice a week to discuss student work and share instructional strategies. Teams use tools such as the Tuning Protocol to provide warm and cool feedback to teachers and develop strategies to support target level 3 students. In addition, shared strategies inform curricula planning using standards-based practices and the refinement of success criteria in alignment with the school's goals. Teachers reported that these collaborations help with planning rigorous tasks such as the grade 5 Roman Civilization unit essential questions like "Is Julius Caesar an effective leader?", "Why or why not?" A review of agendas and notes reflect similar activities across grade teams.

- During a grade 1 team meeting, teachers used the Tuning Protocol to determine how the presented student was meeting the standards in writing and how to further improve the quality of the work. Teachers provided feedback and shared strategies such as the use of transition words and editing using a rubric. In addition, the team decided to review the grade 2 standards as a guide. During their next meeting, the team will discuss ways they could support all of their target level 3 students toward exceeding the standards especially in the area of using text evidence to support their claims for opinion writing.

- All teams have a grade leader yet facilitation of each meeting is rotated weekly. Curriculum planning committees are provided time during the school day to review and revise curriculum maps based on grade-level team discussions. Planning committees have predominately made decisions on the types of curricula used in the school and revisions to the placement and pacing of specific units of study. In grade 2, teachers decided to move the Islamic civilization unit to the beginning of the year and placed poetry in April based on a review of student work products. Similarly, grade 1 teachers moved their ancient civilization unit towards the end of the year.