



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 024 Spuyten Duyvil

Elementary School X024

**660 West 236 Street
Bronx
NY 10463**

Principal: Andrea Feldman

**Date of review: May 17, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Heidi Pierovich**

The School Context

P.S. 024 Spuyten Duyvil is an elementary school with 1,012 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 9% Asian, 6% Black, 42% Hispanic, and 39% White students. The student body includes 3% English Language Learners and 14% 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 94.3%.

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	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	Developing
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	Developing
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	Developing
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	Celebration	Proficient

Area of Celebration

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in organized inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, strengthening the instructional capacity of the teachers who have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are engaged in several teams, or committees, including grade, professional development, and response to intervention. Newly created this year, teachers meet by topic across grades in vertical teams for reading, writing, and math. Teachers self-selected which vertical team to join based on their interest or need. For grade teams, teachers stated that their purpose is to collaborate and support each other. “We are each other’s sounding boards because we all have similar problems and have tried similar [strategies], so someone will suggest an instructional strategy to try that will work. It’s very collegial.” During team grade meetings, teachers reflect on what worked and/or did not work, and if students do not achieve at set goals.
- Each teacher team has a teacher serving as the leader who facilitates each meeting. Teacher leaders also meet as a team, are liaisons to administration, and share information back to their teams. Teachers who are members of a professional development (PD) team, make decisions around needed professional learnings based on teams’ feedback and discussions, and then create and present learning opportunities for their colleagues. Additionally, the PD team has organized and conducted visits to other schools to observe best practices that can be adapted, and teachers conduct intervisitations within their own school to share best practices.
- Teachers look at student work using a protocol that asks probing questions, suggests alternative research-based strategies, and decides on a plan of action to determine next steps in teaching and revising curricula. Teachers spoke about how looking at student work has improved their instructional practice. One teacher stated, “This is the best team I have worked, as I am new to both the school and grade. They [helped me] to bring what students need to do in grade 1 through planning, crafting ways to best support students, and creating rubrics. This has been great for me!” Others concurred about their own growth as they too have adopted shared strategies. One teacher summed up others’ statements, “We all came from different backgrounds and experiences, and help each other grow and learn as we unofficially meet daily.”

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies are becoming aligned to the curricula, beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best, and inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Student work products and discussions are not always accessible to all students.

Impact

As a result, of uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and higher-order thinking discussions, high levels of student thinking are not yet consistently reflected in work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The staff and administration believe that, “students learn best when they work collaboratively, learn with discussion, and students develop their own questioning and discussion using protocols.” However, these beliefs are inconsistently being implemented across classrooms.
- Multiple entry points were inconsistently implemented to support all students, although the population is 3% English Language Learners (ELLs) and 14% students with disabilities, and includes gifted and talented students. In a kindergarten class, a group of students noted vocabulary words, another read books about community helpers, while the teacher worked with a group on plant life cycle. In a grade 5 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class during the opening activity, students noted evidence and synthesized how a character changed in his/her leveled book they were reading. Next, students applied this evidence gathering and synthesizing method to a book that the entire class was reading. Although students selected their leveled books, all students had the same graphic organizers to synthesize character changes. Conversely, in a grade 2 math class, although different student pairs had leveled problem-solving worksheets to estimate measurements, some partners were able to estimate, others struggled and were not successful, and only some students received teacher support. In addition, in a grade 4 ICT class students had group roles to create buildings or boats for an era they had previously researched. Some students were merely involved in painting or coloring, while a student with the researcher role used a laptop to return to previous research to check a boat’s detail. When done with that task, he did not have another task to do, and sat idly. Although some students engaged in artistic tasks, others had none and roamed from group-to-group.
- In a grade 4 ELA class with gifted and talented students, students engaged in high-level discussion and reflected on a transcript of the group’s prior discussion. This was to learn how to engage in more effective group discussions. As a group, students annotated and discussed the transcript, determining if previous statements had contributed to the discussion, or if they had merely repeated earlier statements. Yet this level of peer discussion was not evident in other classes. In a grade 3 science class, students answered low-level Depth of Knowledge questions, such as, “Who remembers what the longest [plant] stem [measured] in centimeters has grown?”, and “What did [the group] do to it?”. Students answered in a ping-pong manner from teacher-to-student-to-teacher without peer discussion. In a grade 3 class with gifted and talented students, groups created an animal with an adaptation, students had writing and facilitating roles, but no discussion rules. Although few groups had some students dominating the conversation with an increasingly louder voice, resulting in their words being written, while others were disregarded.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty plan curricula that are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are consistently planned to emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects for all students including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Impact

The faculty builds coherence and promotes college and career readiness for all students through planning rigorous curricula in all subjects to provide opportunities for students to be cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The staff and administration have historically developed their own curricula. Recently staff and administration have adopted Common Core-aligned texts, *Teachers College Writing and Reading Program (TCWRP)*, supplemented with *EngageNY*, for the English Language Arts (ELA) curricula. *TCWRP* is also used to support thematic units in social studies, as staff follows the New York City scope and sequence. To determine students' reading level, teachers employ *Fountas and Pinnell (F&P)* reading running records. Teachers conducted some research to determine a curricular change this year, employing *Envision* for math. Staff and administration follow the New York City scope and sequence, as well as adopting *Fusion*, for science. To support students who are not on grade level, the staff uses *Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention* and *Wilson*, to support students with reading.
- The staff implements a common format for units of study, outlining the timeline, essential questions, major understandings materials, Common Core Learning Standards, focus questions, objectives, key points, activity, video, Common Core-aligned textbook, vocabulary, mentor texts, homework ideas, in-class projects, and culminating activities, thus promoting coherence of practice. Some writing units include smaller weeklong plans that entail a thesis, aim, key questions, daily activities with student grouping, leveled-reading, and tasks. Many lesson plans contain small group leveled activities and a few list partners or group members.
- Most curricula planning documents emphasize higher-order skills. For example, a grade 3 science unit includes an animal adaptation final performance task for both gifted and talented students and for students ready for enrichment. A grade 2 math lesson plan evidences leveled worksheets and student partners delineated to make the content of estimating measurements. A grade 4 persuasive writing unit includes student names for partners and leveled readings assignments with evidence of more writing required for students with higher-level skills.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Common assessments are in place and administered across classrooms. Teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Assessment results are not always used to adjust curricula and instruction. During instruction, teachers inconsistently make effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers administer multiple assessments including the beginning of the year *F&P* baseline, a writing sample and baseline assessment for *TCRWP*, and a math *Envision* assessment, as well as the Measure for Student Learning (MOSL). Teachers are in various stages of the process of putting students into skill-based groups determined from ELA and math assessments data. Although a kindergarten teacher showed use of *F&P* and math pre-assessments for grouping and targeted objectives, there is little to no evidence demonstrated of how other teachers use this data to inform instruction or curricula. Although teachers spoke to the data-cycle process, minimal adjustments to curricula and instruction were evidenced, limiting students' progress toward goals across the school.
- There is evidence of staff implementing *F&P* assessments as a beginning of year assessment in November 2015 and as a benchmark in March 2016. With some analysis of the *F&P* data, the staff and administration determined that some students needed additional support in reading and created a Saturday Academy, which was in session from January through April 2016. An outside consultant analyzed the data, comparing the change from November 2015 to March 2016 for academic gains of those who attended the Saturday Academy. Results show that "the average student in the Saturday Academy grew 1.45 letters compared to 1.17 for all grades 3-5." Those who attended the Saturday Academy also grew two months more than the average student in grades 3 to 5, from 0.58 years compared to 0.38. Furthermore, there was a review of the *F&P* data comparison averaged whole school grade level for November 2015 to March 2016 showing minimal growth. Kindergarten had 55%, growing 0.5-0.9 months, and 31% of the school showed one to three months growth. The rest of the school showed a 3% decline, 8% showed no growth, and grade 5 decreased 12% and 14% showed no growth. However, there was no evidence of deeper analysis of this data to inform instruction.
- In a grade 4 reading workshop with gifted and talented students, the teacher moved group-to-group, noticed a trend of misunderstanding, and brought the class together to adjust the lesson. In a grade 5 ICT class one teacher conferenced with students, providing verbal feedback, as the other teacher supported students who were synthesizing changes in a character about whom they were reading in their leveled book. In a grade 2 math class, the teacher noted on a clipboard student responses of estimating using measurements and verbally adjusted several students' similar misunderstandings. However, she did not make a whole class adjustment to remedy repeated misconceptions. Other teachers used clipboards to note students' completeness, and gave verbal feedback. A grade 3 teacher made notes on a rubric for each group, but did not give it to students, nor did students self-assess. While in another class, students stated they had neither a rubric nor checklist for a social studies group project. In a grade 3 science class, the teacher asked closed-ended questions and accepted single answers without checking for understanding by others.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to staff, and staff in turn develop and communicate expectations to families that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

As a result of the work connected to expectations, staff is developing an understanding of what the expectations are for instruction across classrooms, are being supported by professional development, and are being held accountable. School leaders and staff are developing systems to provide feedback to families regarding student progress toward meeting expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Students shared that they know how they are doing based on teachers' feedback on assignments or through verbal conferencing, however there is not yet consistent written feedback. Furthermore, not all students receive feedback on assignments, or when they do receive information, are able to use it in a meaningful way to improve the next assignment. One student stated and others agreed, "I wish that the school [gave] a chance for kids who get very low [*F&P* scores] for their grade and other kids in the class, to get up some [Lexile] levels a little faster." Another added, "I think that the school needs to expect a little more of some students and help them." When asked about selecting and applying for middle school, students stated that they did not meet with the guidance counselor but did attend a local school's open house. However, parents stated the school provides middle school selection workshops to provide support in the application processes.
- Parents stated there is communication through various methods including emails, phone calls, and one-to-one meetings. However, many parents stated that there is lack of communication regarding student progress toward identified goals. Parents stated that although they get information about their children's achievement during parent-teacher conferences and report cards, there is little to no communication unless the family initiates a query. One parent stated and others agreed, "Unless I email the teacher or ask my daughter, I can't gauge my daughter's reading level, because we don't get [updates from the staff]." Another parent stated, "Teacher-by-teacher it is different and you can reach out because there is an open door policy." A few parent attendees stated some teachers use *Class Dojo*, and another the school's website, to inform families of progress. Parents unanimously agreed when one parent stated, "There is not enough homework or enough graded work coming home to know the extent of [my child's] progress." Parents stated that the homework policy is unclear and expressed a desire for clarity and consistency on homework expectations. Although it varies from teacher-to-teacher, parents noted that a few send leveled readings with skill strategies to support the child at home who is struggling. Some parents stated that they themselves are supplementing their children's homework.
- The administration consistently communicates expectations to staff via emails and professional development (PD), and feedback from observations. In order to meet and set present year instructional expectations, at the beginning of the school year, administration presented the 2014-2015 school year data for students in grades 3 to grade 5 in English Language Arts and math. Administration and staff determined a need to conduct Saturday Academy for support, however only in reading. Clear expectations as to the use of data to support students in meeting learning targets in other content areas was not evident, leading to missed opportunities for students to improve and reach mastery.