

# Quality Review Report

## 2016-2017

**P.S. 298 Dr. Betty Shabazz**

**Elementary 23K298**

**85 Watkins St.  
Brooklyn  
NY 11212**

**Principal: Jonathan Dill**

**Dates of Review:  
March 16, 2017 - March 17, 2017**

**Lead Reviewer: Rod Bowen**

## The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

## Information about the School

P.S. 298 Dr. Betty Shabazz serves students in grade K through grade 5. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm>.

## School Quality Ratings

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Area of Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>

## School Quality Ratings continued

<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	<b>Area of Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school's core values of citizenship, pride, and respect (C.P.R.) serve as a foundation for culture building and social-emotional support. Thoughtful staffing and supportive structures are in place so that each student is known well by at least one adult.

### Impact

The school community maintains a culture that is safe and inclusive, meaningfully involves student voice in decision making, and positively impacts students' academic and personal behaviors.

### Supporting Evidence

- Student government is comprised of those in good academic standing who embody the school's core values. An authentic electoral process takes place that includes debates, campaign speeches, and polling. Student council officers have roles in town halls and daily community circles. They are also integral in peer mediation, running the C.P.R. store, identifying the book of the month, and encouraging their peers to attend Saturday school. A number of students acknowledged that they decided to read a book of the month because someone from the student council recommended it during a morning circle. Student council members also noted that during morning circle they do shout outs as well as lead the school community in the school chant that "motivates us to always do our best."
- In discussing C.P.R., most students were able to articulate their understanding of these values intended to maintain a culture for learning. Specific behaviors spoken about in relation to C.P.R. included doing what you're supposed to do and following directions, not listening to peers who are making poor choices, shouting out people for doing the right thing, and avoiding bullying and fights.
- The school's emphasis on supporting student's social-emotional development is reflected in their partnership with an organization that provides additional full-time social workers to the school. The robust support team, which consists of four social workers, a guidance counselor, social work interns, and a school psychologist, work with other school staff to ensure that students are known well by at least one adult. Students spoke of feeling safe around the adults in the school who will always do something if students are having problems. One noted, "They are always there when you need them." Such healthy relationships with adults in the school are crucial in maintaining a culture of mutual trust that supports personal growth for students and adults.
- Another structure that promotes adult/student relationships is lunch groups that the social worker who coordinates the program refers to as social-emotional advisories. Purposefully selected students participate in one of five small groups that engage in structured activities that run for six to eight sessions before they rotate. With a focus on team building and emotion identification, activities range from yoga to board games.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of effective feedback and checks for understanding.

### Impact

Feedback provided to students is limited as it does not consistently offer next steps for improvement that students understand. Teachers do not consistently make effective adjustments during instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Although students agreed that teachers consistently support them when they need help during instruction, most were not able to speak with clarity regarding the skills and content related to tasks they had completed or their next steps for improvement on those tasks. A scored rubric given to a student as feedback for an opinion-writing task stated that the writer had written a few sentences to hook his reader. The student did not know what that meant but understood that it was good that his work earned a level three out of four on the rubric. Another student incorrectly claimed that a hook was like a conclusion. Similarly, a student who had received feedback on her use of transition words said that they were “like words that a real author may use.” Students’ lack of understanding of their work and effort reflects the limitations of the feedback being provided to them.
- In a math class, a teacher used a thumbs up/thumbs down technique to direct students who did not understand a math concept to meet in a small group for extra support. During an English Language Arts lesson, after modeling the skill of prediction, the teacher asked for students to signal their level of understanding with thumbs up or down. However, she did not adjust instruction to address the misunderstandings of those who had signaled thumbs down. Once independent reading started, a student who claimed to understand the skill said that predicting means where the characters are.
- Across a number of classrooms, teachers engaged in explicit modeling but did not effectively check for understanding and make the necessary adjustments to ensure that students could engage the task in a manner aligned to what was modeled. This was the case in a third-grade class that was charged with annotating extended response questions. One group of students was not clear on why they had underlined specific words and phrases. Another group’s work did not reflect the posted model.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts are purposefully integrated into the school's curricula.

### Impact

Curricular decisions build coherence across grades and subject areas, while promoting rigorous habits, higher-order skills, and college and career readiness for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- A fifth grade reading workshop lesson plan focused on using details from text to make inferences and engage in evidence-based discussions. Within the plan, the teacher noted her instructional challenge of working to move students beyond literal comprehension to deeper understanding of the text through inferencing. Before having the students engage text, the class would first analyze and make inferences based on details found within images.
- Reading and writing standards used to inform the writer's workshop lesson plan for a fourth and fifth grade self-contained class involved students having an understanding of how details in text can be used to draw inferences that support analysis and reflection. The task was for students to use a rubric to evaluate a piece of writing and then justify their ratings in discussion with a partner.
- The learning target for a kindergarten math lesson was for students to be able to construct a model to solve a math problem. Manipulatives would also be used to have students compare groups of objects to discern which was greater than, less than, or if they were equal to each other. To provide students with opportunities to apply math to real world scenarios, the task involved counting leaves within piles at a park and balls that children had to play with. The task required that students collaborate and ask each other questions such as, "Which pile has more leaves?" and "How can you compare the number of leaves in both piles? Explain."
- The math lesson plan for a first grade class was aligned to the learning standard focused on adding and subtracting within 20. Math fluency was also emphasized as students would be encouraged to apply any of a number of strategies including counting on, making 10, and using easier or known sums. The plan also noted that the learning target would be supported by encouraging students to "construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others."

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points that meet the needs of all learners.

### Impact

Student work products reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation as all learners, including students with disabilities, are not consistently prepared to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

### Supporting Evidence

- A kindergarten class was separated into two groups. While half of the class was engaged in phonics instruction with the teacher, the rest of the students worked on a word identification worksheet that required them to color in, trace, and spell the word "said." Most of the students engaged in this task had no idea what "said" meant or how to use it in a sentence. One student confused it with "sit" and another with "is." This activity occupied students' time with doing but involved very little thinking.
- A self-contained class worked on a word problem after having annotated it with the teacher. The worksheet asked students to refer to the word problem and to account for what they needed to find out, what they knew, and what they would use. In looking at student work, it was clear that most of them understood that they were solving for the number of batches of cookies a character made, although a couple of students thought they were counting cookies as opposed to batches. Most understood that the character had two cups of flour and needed one fourth of a cup of flour to make one batch of cookies. However, a number of students did not understand how one fourth related to two or one. With no scaffold or resource to support their understanding of fractions, these students either stopped working or attempted to apply an incorrect math operation.
- Similarly, in a second grade math class, students used their understanding of the value of coins to determine the amount of money that different combinations of coins totaled. However, many students confused the coins and therefore came up with incorrect answers. One common point of confusion was that the side of the coin presented in the workbook was different from the side modeled for the class. Although manipulatives were available, this confusion persisted, indicating that the appropriate entry points were not effectively leveraged to ensure high-levels of thinking in student work products.
- Groups of students collaborated on annotating text in a self-contained class. According to the curricula, the annotation was to focus on the main idea and important information in order to draw inferences. Student work showed annotation for comprehension. For example, a student underlined a sentence that included, "... after my run-in with that monster machine." His comment was, "Why was he running with a monster machine?" Another group's work contained ideas of what unfamiliar words might mean, such as suggesting that doling (out) eggs, meant laying eggs. The application of annotation as a close reading strategy did not result in the students' abilities to access the text and the task, hindering opportunities for higher-order thinking.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate the importance of explicit modeling and differentiation to all teaching staff. School leaders and staff consistently communicate with parents and offer ongoing feedback related to student performance and high expectations.

### Impact

Teachers are provided with training and are held accountable for explicit modeling and differentiation through various means. Parents understand their children's academic progress toward instructional goals.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's professional development plans reveal a commitment to skills such as meeting the math needs of all learners and improving instruction of ELLs. Teacher team meeting minutes included topics related to explicit modeling. Observation reports contained feedback that enforced these instructional expectations. The assistant principal provided a teacher with next steps on how to deepen the explicit modeling strategy. Specifically, she encouraged the teacher to make transparent her internal thinking during read alouds, as well as sharing an exemplar literary essay. Another report offered clear direction for Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) teachers to document student responses during turn and talks in order to form small groups to deepen student understanding of text.
- Weekly memos from leadership also emphasize clear expectations. One shared a website that contained videos of teachers modeling exemplar tasks with students. Another stressed the importance of small groups during math instruction. A third memo prefaced the use of student-created writing toolkits. Tools such as mini charts, transition lists, and check-lists were noted as viable resources to be included in the kits.
- Although there were inconsistencies in the effectiveness of differentiation strategies across classrooms observed, there was evidence that all teachers are purposefully beginning lessons with explicit modeling strategies and designing small-group learning experiences intended to address a diversity of learners.
- The community school director spoke of how staff works to empower parents to realize how important they are to their children's education. Parents confirmed that teachers communicate with them through monthly newsletters, phone calls, and conferences regarding their children's learning and progress toward goals. These communications have included a list of reading levels so that parents can track progress, personalized letters that clearly outline what their child is struggling with and what the parent can do at home to support their child, strategies that support students working independently at home, and packets containing materials that students can work on at home.



## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The majority of teachers engage in structured inquiry teams that consistently analyze student work and assessment data.

### Impact

The work of teacher teams promotes the achievement of school goals, improves teacher practice, and supports progress toward goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- A multi-grade inquiry team discussed the explicit modeling strategies that members had all been using to determine how to deepen them and increase their effectiveness. Using a norm-setting protocol, they delved into the work of one teacher as a case study. At one point, it was clarified that they were following the protocol and writing out teacher moves they would like to see in the modeling. As the conversation progressed, they agreed on prioritizing visual and metacognitive think alouds, but they disagreed on the use of step-by-step strategies. They were unable to achieve consensus on the latter and agreed collectively to go deeper into the two former strategies. To hold each other accountable, they agreed that they would do another round of intervisitation. This level of discourse deepened teacher practice and pedagogical thinking.
- Minutes from a pre-kindergarten inquiry meeting showed that the team focused on the work of three students. The looking at student work protocol they followed had them identify what each student did well, where they were challenged, and what strategic next steps would improve their performance. Student-specific strategies included having one student use a number line and visuals, while another child would be supported by working on breaking down the word problems. The third student's work showed significant improvement in using the correct numbers, equation, and strategy to answer the problem correctly. As a result, he would be removed from the inquiry target group so that another student in need of intervention could be added.
- Notes from the second grade team consistently documented the team's commitment to identifying inquiry groups of students in each teacher's class. In some cases, students' work was analyzed. In other instances, chapter assessment data was reviewed. Learning standards to be emphasized were labeled with the appropriate inquiry groups. In addition, specific teaching strategies and learning targets were listed. Assessment questions that would be given to the inquiry group students to determine their levels of mastery and the possibility of being removed from the group were also listed.