

# Quality Review Report

## 2016-2017

**P.S. 146 Ann M. Short**

**Elementary 04M146**

**421 East 106th St.  
Manhattan  
NY 10029**

**Principal: Mona Silfen**

**Dates of Review:  
January 25, 2017 - January 26, 2017**

**Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella**

## 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. 146 Ann M. Short serves students in grade PK 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>Developing</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>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</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>Proficient</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>Developing</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>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

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

The school's approach to culture building and discipline includes structures that ensure students are supported with their social-emotional and learning needs.

### Impact

The school sustains a safe environment that promotes an inclusive culture where student learning and voice is welcomed and the school culture supports the academic and personal growth of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- All members of the school community understand the value of their cultural traditions and appreciate the cultural diversity of the school through a range of activities such as extracurricular classes in dance, art, music, and partnerships with organizations such as the 92nd Street Y and the Jewish Museum as well as affiliations with the Harlem School of Art and Creative Arts Workshops for Kids. To support the social-emotional needs of students and families, the school partners with the Union Settlement Association providing individual, group and family therapy in the school. The school has a multicultural day where students bring a dish that represents their family and culture and they also prepare presentations about their heritage to share with the school community. As a result, on the most recent School Survey, 94 percent of the parents reported "My child's teachers incorporate materials about different races, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, and families into the curriculum to make learning more meaningful." Students, parents and teachers revealed that these activities have promoted higher levels of respect, all of which contributes to the continued academic and personal growth of students and adults.
- Students reported that the school has provided opportunities to have students give input in key school decisions. For example, students suggested to the principal to participate in fundraising activities or suggestions to have better choices at lunch including opportunities to have healthy snack options. Also, there is a yearbook committee where students have opportunities to make decisions about the yearbook and graduation activities.
- The school has implemented the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model and uses "Bee Bucks" as rewards for reinforcement of positive behavior. Students report feeling safe and that staff quickly resolve issues and concerns. They shared that "teachers support us" and "the principal, assistant principals and any staff member are always there to help us." Furthermore, parents reported that "there is an adult at the school whom students trust and can go to for help with a school problem." There is an orderly environment in classrooms and common areas. Students behaved well and were eager and ready to learn, showing politeness and good manners. Adults and students' interactions revealed that they understood and followed the school's expectations for scholarly behavior.
- The school social worker provides services to 40 girls using the Beautiful Me curriculum, a program designed to teach female students how to think positively and with assurance about their bodies, their skills, and their relationships with others. Parents and students reported that this program has been a very helpful support for students and had provided them an additional set of strategies to help them meet their learning needs. During the student meeting, two girls were present and shared, "I used to be very shy and my participation in the Beautiful Me program has helped me feel confident with myself." This was also noticed during the students' interview where those girls responded to questions in an articulate and cohesive manner.

## Area of Focus

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

The school's set of beliefs is beginning to align to curricula that engage students in high levels of thinking and student participation through higher-order questioning. Student-to-student discussions demonstrate inconsistent levels of student thinking and engagement.

### Impact

As a result of uneven teaching practices, some students are not yet fully engaged in questions that would lead to student-to-student discussions that reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal stated that students learn best when teachers are able to plan collaboratively to implement “differentiated instruction, student-to-student discussions, supports and scaffolds, use of different co-teaching models, flexible scheduling and grouping. Student are encouraged to engage in higher-order thinking, questioning and discussions, adding onto classmates’ comments, deepening their content understanding and student outcomes.” However, in five out of seven classrooms visited, although students were seated in groups, tasks were not consistently developed so that students worked collaboratively, participating in student-to-student discussions or engaging in higher-order thinking questioning and discussions. For example, in a fifth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) reading class, students were working in groups to describe the various influences in Jackie Robinson’s life. Each teacher was facilitating a group of students while the third group was facilitated by one of the students. Similarly, in a third-grade mathematics class, students had multiple opportunities to turn and explain their thinking while using academic language. These teaching practices are yet to be implemented in other classrooms. In others visited there was limited student discussion in teacher-directed lessons that produced low student engagement.
- Classroom visits revealed that there are pockets of rigorous instruction in some classrooms where the lessons demonstrated planning around effective teaching strategies. For example, in a writing class, students were engaged in revising their personal narrative stories by adding dialogue to show a character’s emotions using powerful words. The teacher engaged the students in peer-to-peer conversations about their writing and asked them to share out to explain where the dialogue happened in their story. Then, the teacher asked the students if they were able to picture it. Most students displayed better understanding of their next steps and moved on with their writing while the teacher circulated around the room supporting students who did not yet understand or master the concepts. However, this practice of leveraging students’ progress and participation to support their classmates is not consistently or successfully implemented across classrooms. As a result of the inconsistent use of effective teaching strategies school-wide, there are limited opportunities for some students to demonstrate knowledge and engage in deep, higher-order thinking through discussion and participation.
- In an ICT mathematics class, the teacher engaged all students in peer-to-peer conversations to define and construct triangles. Several students were able to articulate how to define the different types of triangles, and accomplished their tasks ahead of their peers. Afterwards, they remained idle and did not have any extensions to further their thinking. The students were not able to explain the connections of their learning target to real world applications. When asked why they were learning about triangles, their answers were “because I need to pass the math test,” or “I want to get good grades.” As a result of this missed opportunity to provide real world connections to the learning target, students were prevented to further engage in higher levels of student thinking and participation.

## Additional Finding

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

School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to Common Core Learning Standards. Academic tasks with higher order thinking skills were planned inconsistently across classrooms and for all learners.

### Impact

Across classrooms, limited access to curricula and academic tasks for all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, lessens opportunities for college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school started implementing Core Knowledge for kindergarten through second grade, *Expeditionary Learning* in grades three through five, supplemented by Writer's Workshop, District 4 Writing Initiative, and Blast! for phonics. For mathematics, the school uses EngageNY, supplemented by the National Training Network (NTN) in kindergarten through fifth grade. For social studies and science, the school has begun to align the curriculum to the meet the Common Core expectations. A review of curricula revealed that teachers have yet to fully implement the curricula with modifications and adjustments to better meet the diverse learning needs of the school's student populations.
- School leaders shared that units of study in literacy and mathematics incorporate Common Core Learning Standards and focus on increasing higher-order thinking in reading and problem-solving. However, there is inconsistency in planning for higher-order thinking skills in academic tasks across the grades and subjects. For example, instructional documents revealed just a list of learning targets for each unit of study. However, there is no indication of using academic tasks emphasizing higher-order skills to achieve these targets.
- The principal shared that the school uses Core Knowledge Supplemental Guides to inform strategies for students with disabilities and ELLs. For example, in a student mathematics portfolio, the teacher ensured that tasks are translated into students' native languages, such as Arabic. Some lessons integrate rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills through the use of Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK). However, this type of planning and support outlined in the Core Knowledge Supplemental Guides are not yet reflected in most instructional planning documents.
- The review of instructional planning documents revealed that teachers have common planning meetings on Mondays and are using data when planning tasks aligned to the curriculum. However, there are gaps in the design of these tasks that do not support the diversity of learners across the school, thus affecting higher levels of thinking and challenging work for students. For example, in a second-grade ELA lesson plan, students are tiered in groups to work on differentiated tasks addressing the needs of all learners, including extensions for higher achievers. However, other instructional planning documents do not include differentiated tasks.
- Lesson plans reviewed revealed inconsistent use of data to inform instruction. For example, one English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan shared by the principal showed evidence that running records data on students' reading levels is used to inform instructional decisions and groupings. However, across classrooms, most lessons have yet to reflect how student data informs the teacher to create their groupings or make instructional decisions to create differentiated tasks.

## Additional Finding

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

Teachers use and create assessments, include rubrics in lessons, that provide limited feedback to students. Teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding, and opportunities for students to self-assess their work varies.

### Impact

Across classrooms, teacher assessment practices are beginning to provide feedback to students. Some students are not fully aware of their next learning steps and, as a result, consistent student progress is hindered.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school uses rubrics for ELA and mathematics, and teachers are beginning to design rubrics for science and social studies. On student work posted in classrooms and hallways there was inconsistent levels of actionable feedback. For example, in the mathematics classroom the attached rubrics included next learning steps however, on some of the written assignments posted in the hallway, rubrics were only circled or highlighted with no next learning step noted.
- During the interview with students, they articulated how they use their rubrics in mathematics and ELA, they also indicated that in most cases the teacher highlights the rubric in the areas they did well or need to improve on. They also mentioned that sometimes the teacher would give them written feedback, but in most cases the feedback is just verbal. Students did not recall using rubrics for science and social studies.
- A review of student folders and work products showed inconsistent use of rubrics, actionable feedback and next steps. For example, feedback given to students using post-it notes on a bulletin board in a mathematics classroom indicated the students' level aligned to a rubric with rating levels one-four and the teacher offered actionable feedback such as; "great job using repeated addition and mathematics vocabulary. I would like to see you push yourself to show more vocabulary and show more alternate strategies that can be used to solve." However, providing actionable feedback and next steps to students are currently practices that are inconsistent across grades and subjects.
- Across classroom visited, teachers inconsistently engaged students in self-assessment practices. For example, in a self-contained special education class, the students were using an age-appropriate rubric to assess their learning target, then they share it with the teacher. However, this practice was not observed in other classrooms. Furthermore, students articulated that they did not have an opportunity to engage in self-assessment activities. In addition, students reported that they do not have opportunities to assess their own work. Teachers shared that most students are not ready to engage in self-evaluation.
- Classroom visits revealed that some teachers are implementing several strategies to check for understanding such as: exit slips, making rounds around the room, 1:1 conferencing, turn and talk, thumbs up, thumbs down, and flash card activities. The impact of the strategies has been that some teachers have better information of students understanding and mastery of content. Although some teachers are checking for understanding, they are yet to use gathered assessment data to modify or make effective on-the-spot adjustments during instruction to meet the learning needs of students.



## 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 and staff have established a culture that consistently communicates high expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness to both students and families, and provide families with information relative to their children's academic performance and progress.

### Impact

The school's high expectations for learning are shared with all staff and families who work collaboratively with each other to ensure that they all meet the expectations that prepare students for the next level, and families understand student progress toward those expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations to families via written notices, telephone calls, a family handbook, workshops, the school website, and instructional field trips. Parents are valued and say that the school is concerned for and supportive of them and their children. For example, parents shared that they enjoy and learn in workshops and opportunities to participate in Family Friday for curricular and celebratory activities with their children. These parent engagement activities strengthen links between school and home and promote relationships that are respectful and make an important contribution to students' personal and academic achievements.
- Parents mentioned that all teachers consistently contact parents on Tuesdays to communicate grades, behavior issues, and messages for upcoming school events. Parents revealed that they receive calls or come in to speak with teachers in the event that they have to inform them of their child's academic progress and areas of growth. They also mentioned that their engagement extends beyond the communication with teachers; they are able to connect with the principal, assistant principals, or other staff members as well if they have an urgent matter to address.
- The school offers several events to 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. For example, one of the workshops for parents was to train them how to use "A Guide to Independent Reading for Parents." This guide provided strategies for parents to help their children read across the content areas. These practices are resulting in having one-hundred percent of the parents "strongly agree" or "agree" that the school staff regularly communicate with parents and guardians about how parents and guardians can help students learn as indicated in the 2016 School Survey.
- Parents indicated that they are receiving support in completing the middle school application during workshops or in one-on-one sessions with a fifth grade teacher supporting articulation to middle school. Students and parents also mentioned going on tours to visit middle schools and attending middle school fairs to support them in making important decisions. One student indicated that she received support from her teacher to prepare her for an admission interview at a middle school.



## Additional Finding

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

The majority of teachers meet in professional collaborations and analyze assessment outcomes and student work and plan instruction. Inquiry teams are inconsistently using an inquiry approach to analyze student assessment data and student work.

### Impact

Teachers value the time to work collaboratively with colleagues to support their professional growth and discuss instructional strategies aligned to schoolwide goals. However, the use of an inquiry approach is yet to result in improved pedagogy and student progress.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly across grade levels. During teacher team meetings, teachers are required to discuss and document how the work of the team promotes the implementation of the school goals and what supports are needed to continue student progress. Teachers are assigned roles and use protocols in all team meetings to maximize the meeting time. Immediately following the team meetings, all agendas are submitted to the principal.
- In a fourth grade meeting, teachers used a “Formative Assessment Analysis T-Chart: Strengths and Gaps,” created by the Emerging Teachers Leaders Program, to look at student work. Then they discussed different strategies to make instructional decisions to support students and improve their work. During the discussion, teachers identified that students demonstrate strong skills in bringing characters to life and are able to think of one specific event from their own personal experience. Some of the gaps identified included a lack of structure in paragraphs and essays and missing transitions in showing passage of time. As a result, teachers developed an action plan with specific teaching strategies to support their students such as using transition words, using graphic organizers, using mentor texts and using oral language to expand written language.
- A review of teacher team agendas and minutes indicated that during weekly professional collaborations, teachers align their team’s work with meeting the school goals. However, the products of the meetings are reflecting inconsistencies in determining next steps to improve teaching practice. For example, in the outcome of one of the sessions, the teachers determined that students need to start labeling their words using correct letter-sound correspondence, or students need to stay on topic in their writing. The next steps were “continue to assess the students.” Similarly, other documents mostly focused on students’ gaps. Teachers are yet to incorporate next steps to improve teaching practice and to make instructional adjustments. As a result of this inconsistent practice, teachers are yet to effectively collaborate to improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.