

Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 016 John J. Driscoll

Elementary 31R016

**80 Monroe Ave.
Staten Island
NY 10301**

Principal: Michele Ramos

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

Lead Reviewer: Mitchell Center

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. 016 John J. Driscoll 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	Additional Finding	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	Additional Finding	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	Area of Focus	Proficient

School Quality Ratings continued

School Culture

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	Additional Finding	Proficient
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Finding	Proficient

Systems for Improvement

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area	Rating
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	Additional Finding	Proficient
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	Additional Finding	Proficient
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	Additional Finding	Proficient
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Area of Celebration	Well Developed
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	Additional Finding	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Staff is engaged in professional learning collaborations that are frequently teacher led and focused on continually growing practices to meet the needs of a diverse population of learners.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in strengthened instructional practice and coherence across grades that have led to improvement in the achievement of all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Reviewing student work and looking for the collective strengths and needs of students is the on-going work of both grade-level and vertical teams. Teachers work collaboratively to determine student learning needs based on reflections of student writing. For example, a vertical team of educators met to review and discuss several pieces of writing to identify the greatest strength and growth areas in each grade. This same team is a lab site and is part of a broader collaborative with other schools that have dual language programs. Teachers whom are a part of this multi-school collaborative read shared texts, conduct inter-visitations, present to one another and host teachers from other schools for collaborative learning sessions.
- The expectation is that everyone is a valued colleague and that administration is building capacity in everyone. This willingness by teachers to learn from one another led to the creation of an additional assistant principal who could further support the school's instructional vision. Teachers and staff frequently commented on their ability to make instructional decisions that impact teaching and organizational options school-wide. Teachers shared that they work in teams to identify "hot topics" or trends within the grade that they try to focus on vertically across all grades. Teachers joining ICT had opportunities teams to learn best practices from one another in a professional development session coordinated by the school leadership. Teacher suggested several times that there is a sense of trust between staff members and between faculty and administration.
- Distributed leadership structures are in place and teachers are making instructional decisions that impact student learning. Teachers collaborate with grade and subject-specific teams to modify curriculum to meet the needs of students. Distributed leadership structures are also evident in the school's approach to professional development. Teachers have the opportunity to select what they would like to learn about, but also have the opportunity to lead sessions that they have expertise and strengths in. In this regard, teachers exercise leadership in the school and support student learning by supporting and developing one another.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Results from common assessments, checks for understanding and student self-assessment are used to adjust curricula and instruction to make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The alignment to the Common Core is evidenced by the enhanced writing expectations seen in classes based on pre-unit assessments. Reading level progress is set with a benchmark and multiple Fountas and Pinnell assessments are administered throughout the year to monitor student progress. Student writing is frequently reviewed and beginning, mid-year and end-of-year writing pieces are produced so progress can be carefully captured.
- In math, students have been assessed and the lowest performing third of each class uses Compass Learning as an intervention. Progress is carefully monitored and teachers use data to make instructional decisions to best meet students' mathematical needs.
- Checks for understanding were visible in classroom visits, and teachers responded instantly to student confusion. Several teachers use red, yellow and green cards on student tables so students can self-identify whether or not they understand the given material. There is evidence that students self-assess using rubrics, and that students provide feedback to one another through regular peer assessment.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core, integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students, and plan and refine using student work and data.

Impact

Purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students lead to curricula with skills and learning activities that allow for a diversity of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, to have access to the curricula and to be cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Two features of planning that were visible in nearly every lesson and unit plan were question stems and a success criteria. Question stems get at the pre-planned questions that help ensure teachers are asking higher level and text-based questions, and the success criteria shows the schools emphasis on making learning visible. The “success criteria” statements written in teacher plans were often seen posted in classrooms and student attention was called to the posters.
- The math team implemented a protocol that has been used across all grades and is evident in lesson and unit plans. At the end of a lesson cycle teachers administer a formative assessment to gauge the level of mastery in the class. The school is using exemplar assessments to ensure standards are accurately targeted and to best ensure consistency across grades and classrooms.
- Small group instruction targeting the diverse needs of learners is evident in lesson and unit plans, and is driven by assessment data that the school gathers through a variety of means. Students with disabilities and ELLs as well as other learners with varying needs, are included in small group instruction lessons that are planned throughout the day across grades and subjects. After reading assessments are given and student reading levels are known, guided reading groups are formed so instruction can be delivered to students at their appropriate instructional level.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies (including questioning, scaffolds in English or native language, and routines) consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Consistent teaching strategies has led to engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Consistent math practices are in place to support the needs of all learners. Strategic math groups have been implemented in grades 3-5 to provide differentiated supports to students who require additional assistance. These groups meet 2-3 times per week and focus on math fluency. “Fundamentals” math groups also meet regularly and focus on breaking down and understanding complex word problems. Evidence of this group approach in mathematics was seen across several classrooms. In “fundamentals” groups, students across grades are taught the acronym C.U.B.E.S. which is a step-by-step process for solving math word problems.
- Active engagement in lessons promoting higher-order thinking skills was observed across grades and subjects. During a grade four read-aloud in ELA, students engaged by conducting a “stop and jot” based off the question, “How do you think the three brothers will solve their problem?” They then followed up with a Think-Pair-Share with a partner. In a fourth grade ICT class, students engaged in a writing task with varying levels of support. Some used a color-coded scaffold to help them write their opinions and reasons, others conferenced with the teacher who circulated, and still others worked independently. In nearly all classrooms observed, students were seen engaged in higher order thinking skills.
- The school is working to increase the level of conversation and dialogue in the classroom. Cooperative learning prompts are used consistently across grades and subjects to provide for multiple entry points into the curriculum, and to promote conversation and participation for all students. Roles such as “connector” (the person who links ideas) and “builder” (the person who adds on to a conversation) are assigned to kids to ensure that all students discuss and participate. In one class, students were conducting a “grand conversation,” which is a structured discussion protocol about a book that requires all students to sit in a circle and participate. For this conversation, the teacher posted eight specific guidelines, including, “Everyone has a chance to speak,” and “If you didn’t get a chance to add your answer, write down any additional things you wanted to say in your notebook.” In these ways, the school is working to ensure that student discussions reflect a high level of thinking.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations of teaching and learning. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

The school leaders have a system for accountability that promotes high expectations for teachers, and staff communicates high expectations to students through detailed feedback, preparing them for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders utilize formal/informal observations, walk-throughs, and review of student work, feedback and reflective questioning to consistently communicate high expectations. School goals and interim benchmarks hold staff accountable for meeting instructional goals and accelerated student learning. Systems of accountability are in place as teachers are provided with varying levels of support and leadership responsibilities depending on their needs and strengths.
- School leaders have communicated and provided professional learning opportunities to support teachers on Domain 3 of the Danielson Framework in order to make explicit the expectations for teaching and learning and attributes of effective instructional practice. The school provides weekly professional learning opportunities to support the growth of teachers in questioning techniques, discussion methods and data analysis. For example, leadership and staff have provided professional learning opportunities focused on discussion toolkits so that teachers will have a broader range of skills to engage students through questioning and discussion techniques.
- The school's shift toward greater and more in-depth student dialogue reflects the staff's high expectations for all students. For example, students are leading discussions and are taking on more ownership of their work. In classrooms visited, protocols for conversations were seen on the walls and at tables, and portions of most observations included time for kids to engage with each other.
- Teacher feedback to students reflects the high expectations they have as they prepare them for the next grade and for the next level of schooling. Students experience increasing amounts of rigor and autonomy as they grow through the school. Fifth graders were seen reading and writing and engaging in high-level dialogue, and students expressed feeling challenged, engaged and prepared for the rigors and independence of middle school.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths and leaders have a system to use teacher evaluation data effectively.

Impact

Teacher feedback supports improved instruction, and the administration uses teacher evaluation results to formulate professional development plans for individual teachers and for the entire staff.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders support the development of teachers in a variety of ways. Tailored support is provided to teachers when they are new to the school, when they are teaching a new grade or subject or when a new initiative is rolled out. For example, as the school concentrated its efforts on increasing student dialogue and discussion, lessons were modeled and administrators tailored their support to teachers who needed it most. Additionally, the school leaders are careful to draw on all the adults in the building as potential sources of support, so if teachers have a particular strength or skill, administrators find opportunities to have them model what they know to support other teachers.
- Mid-way through the year a teacher survey was conducted so administrators could assess what skills and knowledge teachers wanted to learn and focus on, and what skills and knowledge they have to support other teachers. The mid-year survey results were utilized to further inform teachers' individual professional development plans, and to help the administration chart the course for what will be focused on in the spring and in the summer as they plan for the following year. For example, many teachers have been focusing on enhancing their discussion techniques throughout their lessons. A professional development calendar for the second half of the year reveals teacher interest in learning how to best leverage discussions to enhance student writing.
- School leaders utilize the strengths of faculty to support teachers with varying needs. The school has increased its focus on literacy and challenged out of classroom to support literacy initiatives in their instructional areas. Rounds of informal observations were conducted with the reading specialist and student-reading levels were shared with these cluster teachers. In this way, the administration is building off the relative strengths of some staff members to increase the knowledge base of other staff so that student learning is positively impacted.
- The administrators prioritize spending time in classrooms to understand student and teacher needs, and to provide support. Frequent formal and informal observations of teachers are conducted, and administrators confer with teachers as soon as possible following observations. Individualized professional plans are created with teachers at the beginning of the year and are frequently modified based on the strengths and needs of the teacher.