

Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 207 Elizabeth G. Leary

K-8 22K207

**4011 Fillmore Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11234**

Principal: Neil J. McNeill, Jr.

**Dates of Review:
March 20, 2019 - March 21, 2019**

Lead Reviewer: Jerry Brito

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. 207 Elizabeth G. Leary serves students in grade PK through grade 8. 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	Area of 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 Finding	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	Area of Celebration	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed
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	Additional Finding	Proficient
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:	1.4 Positive Learning Environment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school's approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support is informed by a theory of action that focuses on inclusion of all students into the school community, which is evident in the Safe Zone student club. Family outreach and student learning experiences and supports are strategically aligned to the building of an inclusive school community.

Impact

Students benefit from a safe environment that is inclusive, respectful, and guided by student voice through venues such as the student government. The school involves student voice in decision-making processes that result in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's approach to culture-building is that students learn best in a safe and inclusive school environment that encourages them to use their voices to contribute to the school community. For example, the school established Safe Zone, a student-led club that focuses on promoting understanding of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning) community. In one meeting, Safe Zone members met with an advisor to review a PowerPoint presentation for an upcoming meeting with the school community. The presentation included statistics related to the suicide rates among the LGBTQ community nationwide. Team members gave feedback on the presentation, focusing the discussion on the need for understanding among school members. This resulted in changes to the presentation that addressed potential misconceptions regarding LGBTQ issues. A review of Safe Zone meeting minutes indicates strategic focus on building understanding and inclusion for LGBTQ students and engaging in projects such as petitioning city and state political representatives to vote against anti-LGBTQ legislation. Thus, student voice initiates and leads school improvement efforts in building a safe and inclusive culture.
- The school community strategically aligns student learning and support to its goal of building a safe and inclusive school culture. For example, the school has developed a series of lessons about bullying and tolerance for sixth-graders. Students engage in topics such as the long-term effect of intolerance on a person's life and the efficacy of anti-bullying legislation. Students develop projects, essays, and written reports based on the material. In addition, the school has a program titled Super Dog's Class Got Caught Being Good club, which promotes positive behavior among students in kindergarten, first, and second-grades. Super Dog is the school's mascot. A class observed behaving appropriately during the school day is given a paw print. Ten paw prints garner a reward for the class: a visit by one of Super Dog's friends (a stuffed animal). The class spends the day with the stuffed animal. Social-emotional lessons in the lower grades are centered on the Super Dog mascot and are focused on character development. In a student meeting, all students agreed that they felt safe at the school. One student shared a situation in which she was bullied by a classmate, and the school dealt with it immediately. Consequently, the school's approach to building culture is evident in classroom lessons and other support structures.
- Family workshops are offered to help parents develop their children's academic and personal behavior. Moreover, workshops developed with the local high school help parents focus on children's social-emotional development. For example, in a February workshop, parents and their children from both schools were invited to learn how to deal with the dangers of social media. In a March workshop, parents were taught different strategies to build a healthy emotional relationship with their teenagers. A separate March workshop offered time-management strategies to help parents cope with professional and personal obligations. Overall, professional development and family outreach strategies results in the adoption of effective behaviors.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula through the use of differentiated student groups. Student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation in most classes.

Impact

While multiple entry points are present, it was not evident that differentiated tasks meet the needs of all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs), in all classes. In addition, while there were high levels of student thinking and participation, there was little evidence of student ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Multiple entry points were evident in a fourth-grade math class, where students were learning how to solve math word problems by adding and subtracting mixed numbers. There were seven student groups and three word problems among them. The word problems differed by students' reading levels and the numbers needed to solve the problem. For instance, one word problem asked how much fruit punch is left while another asked about how much time was needed to read over the weekend. In a fifth and sixth-grade self-contained social studies lesson for students with disabilities, they were gathering evidence to compare and contrast the Mayan, Aztec, and Athenian civilizations. Each of the five student groups focused on a particular civilization. Students collaboratively gathered evidence from reading level appropriate texts, wrote the evidence on post-its, and placed them on chart paper. In both classes, students engaged in tasks that differed in content and reading proficiency levels. However, there was no evidence that this differentiation addressed the needs of sub-groups, such as ELLs and students with disabilities.
- In an eighth-grade Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) math class, students worked on matching distance-time graphs to real-life stories to determine rate of change. Groups of students collaboratively completed graphic organizers and selected pre-determined rate graphs to best match the scenarios that students completed. Tasks differed based on the scenarios presented and the complexity of the related graphs. In a third-grade English Language Arts (ELA) class, student groups analyzed the characters in *Peter Pan* by completing a character trait chart. The teacher worked directly with one group where students used the F.A.S.T. (**F**eelings, **A**ctions, **S**ayings, and **T**houghts) strategy to infer characters traits. Across classrooms, teaching practices focused on strategies that allowed students to engage with the content in various ways. However, there was little evidence that the multiple entry points provided targeted students' proficiency levels. In addition, there was little evidence that multiple entry points were designed to address the specific needs of ELLs and students with disabilities.
- Students are engaged in high levels of thinking and participation in most classes. In one seventh-grade ICT ELA class, students analyzed common themes in the photography of Lewis Hine by engaging in a gallery walk. Students worked in groups, and each group made annotations on the photographs with their impressions of what was happening. Once this was done, student groups rotated through five stations, making comments on the photographs at each station. In a seventh-grade science class, students worked in groups to develop a model of how molecules behave during photosynthesis. Each group used different colored disks that represented carbon and oxygen molecules in their models. A review of lessons reveals that classroom practices and work products reflected high levels of thinking and participation. However, these practices did not provide opportunities for students to reflect on the assigned activities and demonstrate how they have taken ownership of their learning.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Curricula and tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students. In addition, curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student assessment data.

Impact

Across grades and subjects, rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized for all learners, as evidenced in unit and lesson plans. Planning for differentiated learning helps ensure that a diversity of learners have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of unit plans across grades shows evidence of rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students. In a seventh-grade social studies unit plan, students are tasked over a series of lessons to study the American Revolution and how the changes in the political, social, and economic realm affected different groups of people. The unit engages students in analysis of texts such as the Declaration of Independence, employing literacy skills such as notetaking and annotation and including self and peer assessments. Modifications for students include different graphic organizers, text-appropriate documents, and proficiency-level appropriate groups. In a sixth-grade literacy unit plan, students are expected to learn about myths and the hero's journey narrative in literature. Students are expected to engage in student-led discussions and analysis of texts such as *The Lightning Thief*, while displaying literacy skills in developing a narrative essay. Modifications for select groups of students involve such supports as previewing language, highlighting context clues, and using anchor charts. Overall, unit plans are designed to engage students in tasks using higher-order skills that require deep analysis of the content.
- In one third-grade lesson plan, students are previewing pertinent vocabulary words needed to understand the book *Peter Pan*. The plan calls for students to form literature circles, with each group having specified roles as outlined in a role sheet. Students are to engage in a group discussion centered on select vocabulary words from the text and how the author's choice of words effect their understanding of the text. In a seventh-grade ELA lesson plan, students are to analyze the photography of Lewis Hine to come to an understanding of the common themes present. Students will first watch a video on a Lewis Hine's photo titled *The Cotton Mill Girl* and then discuss their impressions and the effect of photographs on people. Next, students will work in small, heterogeneous groups to discuss and annotate their assigned photographs. After this, groups will engage in a gallery walk in which they analyze each of the five posted pictures, noting similarities and differences in the observations of various group members. Students with disabilities and other select students will be provided with sentence starters for targeted support. A review of these and other curricular documents reveals an emphasis on rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students.
- Unit plans show evidence of planning to differentiate learning. In a fourth-grade unit plan on Native Americans, students are tasked with studying how history is passed down through the generations through a study of the Iroquois. Students are to engage in tasks such as writing an essay and creating a project about Iroquois' oral traditions. Students with disabilities and ELLs are provided scaffolds centered on vocabulary development graphic organizers aligned with their particular academic needs to ensure their engagement with the material being taught. A review of curricular documents reveals that lesson and unit plans are developed so that student groups are provided the academic supports needed so that all students can access curricula and are cognitively engaged in alignment with their proficiency levels.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments that are aligned with the school's curricula. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment, as evidenced in the portfolio reflection sheets.

Impact

Actionable feedback in the form of a glow and grow model is provided to students, and teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school employs a glow and grow model of assessment in which students' progress is determined providing one area of strength and one next step. In one fourth-grade classroom, groups of students were provided feedback on articles they wrote describing the reasons for the British army to attack American colonists during the Revolutionary War. One group was given a glow that stated the headline captured the British soldiers' feelings. As a next step (grow), the group was told to provide details from a previously-read text on the Revolutionary War to provide further evidence of their claims that the British were under pressure. In a fifth-grade class for students with disabilities, students were given feedback on how they solved a math word problem. As a glow, one student was complimented for showing understanding of the question by the way he/she sorted the given information in the word problem. As a grow, the teacher recommended that the student properly label and use the context of the problem to answer the question asked. A review of academic tasks showed evidence of a consistent use of the glow and grow model to provide actionable feedback across classrooms.
- The school uses a portfolio reflection sheet so that students can monitor and assess their own learning. In a sixth-grade ELA class, one student uses the reflection sheet to memorialize his glows on writing assignments over the course of the school year. He also notes the strategies he will employ to improve upon his writing. For example, in an October entry related to a bullying essay, the student noted that his glow was in explaining well his ideas and the topic. As a grow, the student wrote that he needed to focus on using higher-order vocabulary words and also to develop better sentence structure. As a strategy to address these deficiencies, the student stated that he would take advantage of the peer editing process to see how best to construct sentences. Another student reflected on a January writing midterm assignment. As a glow, the student noted that she was doing an excellent job demonstrating insightful analysis and using relevant evidence. Her grow was to pay closer attention to the proper use of grammar. She made a note to be more attentive to grammar in her next writing assignment. Tasks across classrooms revealed an emphasis on students' reflecting on their own learning.
- Checks for understanding are conducted to inform differentiated instructional activities and to focus students on the academic work. In one eighth-grade ICT math lesson, students worked on matching distance-time graphs to real-life situations using graphic organizers, with differing scaffolds for groups of students. During independent work time, two teachers checked in with the groups, making notes of students' progress. After checking on all groups, the teachers stopped the lesson to address the class, noting that students needed to refocus their attention on what their table assignments were asking. They also emphasized the need for students to make connections to real-world events and to explain those connections as they worked. These classroom practices, as well as those in other classrooms, show that checks for understanding are used across classrooms to make adjustments to instruction.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through the weekly memoranda. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students.

Impact

The school culture results in mutual accountability for high expectations. Students are provided supports to ensure that they own their educational experiences and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through the weekly memoranda. In a January memorandum, school leadership addressed teacher study groups, which the school is using for the first time to enhance teachers' instructional practices, focusing on a variety of themes. Specifically, school leaders reiterated the focus for each study group, including the time frame for studying their themes and adjusting their curricular plans, as needed. Moreover, leaders reinforced the expectation that team members must come to consensus on how they will use the work to modify curricula and instructional practices. In addition, the memorandum highlighted a visit to the school by a cohort of educators from District 22 schools, who offered feedback on how they might improve schoolwide instructional practices. Also, the memorandum highlighted key instructional happenings at the two school sites, including the creation of a school-based assessment in math for kindergarten. The use of weekly memoranda over the course of the school year indicates a focus on instructional coherence regarding expectation and accountability among the different grade levels and between two buildings.
- The school engages in professional learning sessions that communicate schoolwide instructional expectations and provide support to achieve them. All professional learning sessions are aggregated in a document called the Professional Learning and Resource Center, with a focus on the school's instructional work. Part of this online document offers teachers resources collected from the school's inquiry work related to questioning and discussion. In one February professional learning session, school leadership provided PD on giving students opportunities to engage in productive talks. As part of the PD, teachers engaged in a gallery walk to see what other teams were doing with regard to this focus. Professional learning sessions also focused on areas such as providing vocabulary support during student discussions and using teacher-created questions to foster student discussions. The focus on professional learning sessions has also continued the instructional coherence of the school. In a teacher meeting, all teachers agreed that high expectations are regularly communicated to all staff members. One teacher stated that the school leadership is approachable, which allows for easy communication of school expectations and fosters mutual accountability for them.
- School leadership and staff systematically communicate high expectations for all students through venues such as establishing student instructional goals. In the fall, teachers meet with students to establish their instructional goals based on the results of summative assessments in math, reading, and writing. Teachers meet with students three times to establish their goals and discuss their progress towards them. In a student meeting, students stated that this goal-setting process is important for them to understand teachers' expectations. The feedback provided during the goal-setting conferences are placed in an online form, thus making it easier for students to track their progress and make adjustments, when necessary.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that focus on the instructional shifts of citing textual evidence and building math fluency. Distributed leadership structures are in place, such as with content-area ambassadors.

Impact

Professional collaborations in the form of book study groups build the instructional capacity of teachers and allow them to have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers engage in professional collaborations that promote the adoption and implementation of best instructional practices schoolwide. In a third-grade teacher team meeting, the focus was to review student writing using the RACE (**R**estate, **A**nswer, **C**ite, **E**xplain) strategy. After reviewing meeting norms, team members analyzed student writing that answered questions on an article titled “Jump!” Team members shared their noticings, including the use of quotations to support written answers and the implementation of the RACE strategy. Next, team members again reviewed the work products, this time examining students’ answers from the point-of-view of the student to try to understand students’ thinking. The findings of this analysis focused on issues such as the use of punctuation and the student responses that used text evidence but did not refer to the question to ensure alignment. Team members then discussed the implications of their findings. One recommendation centered on reducing the number of bullets in the question so that students can simply focus on the questions. Another was to introduce the use of graphic organizers to help students better organize their thoughts before writing. A review of teacher team minutes and other documents show that this analysis protocol is used by teams schoolwide.
- In a sixth-grade teacher team minutes, teachers analyzed the baseline math assessments to determine students’ strengths and areas of focus to inform student groupings. Analysis of the data revealed that students did not know the multiplication table and they had difficulties solving multi-step math problems. Team members determined that students needed to build their understanding of number sense through use of the number talks strategy and to build their math vocabulary in order to solve multi-step math problems. In the minutes of an eighth-grade teacher team meeting, analysis of literacy data indicated that students were citing relevant evidence in their writing and answering questions. However, it was noted that in argumentative writing, student responses showed little or no analysis of evidence, and they were not acknowledging an opposing view point. It was determined that teachers needed to use explicit modeling, graphic organizers, and students’ goal sheets to articulate next steps. A review of teacher team documents reveals that student data is consistently used to inform teachers’ instructional practices to meet their needs.
- Teachers are given opportunities to have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. This year, the school implemented teacher-led study groups that focus on different instructional components of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. For example, one group of teachers are using Fischer and Frey’s *Checks for Understanding* develop their skills in assessing students’ understanding of taught material. In addition, the school has implemented math and ELA ambassadors, teachers who lead the inquiry work and constitute part of the school’s instructional team. These distributed leadership structures provide an outlet for teachers to impact instructional practices schoolwide.