



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**McKinley Park School**

**Public School 127**

**7805 7th Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11228**

**Principal: Pauline Frank**

**Dates of review: January 18 - 19, 2007**

**Reviewer: Georgie Beasley**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The McKinley Park School is a small elementary school with approximately 400 students enrolled from kindergarten through grade 5. The school's population is made up of 63.8% White, 23.2% Asian, 11.8% Hispanic and 1.1% Black students. The proportion of English language learners at 21.25% is greater than the average in City schools. This number is still growing as more students join the school having just arrived from other countries. The building is small and, as a result, the accommodation is crowded. There has been ongoing construction to create a multi-purpose room to enable the school to organize physical education and artistic performances on a more regular basis. Approximately 10% of the school's population are special education students. This is a smaller proportion than typically found in similar schools. The school received Title 1 funding for the first time last year. The average attendance at almost 95% is above that of similar and City schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The Competent Kids, Caring Classrooms program is a major factor in the students' highly developed sense of social responsibility.
- Students have good knowledge and high levels of respect for the diverse cultures in the school.
- The principal is well respected by staff, students and parents and has the capacity to lead change.
- The administration team leads improvements effectively and ensures the school runs smoothly.
- The art program enriches students' experiences.
- The work of the student council, among other things, makes a valuable contribution in raising the school's profile in the local community.
- Good systems are in place to measure and check individual student's performance and to plan differentiated next steps in learning for nearly all students.
- The comprehensive program of professional development effectively supports the needs of individual teacher's and the school's goals for raising student achievement.
- Effective programs are in place to raise the performance of special education students and English language learners.
- Adults have good relationships with students and so children feel confident about asking for help when needed.

### What the school needs to improve

- Analyze data more closely to identify trends in the achievement of boys and girls and higher achieving students, and use the information to align instruction to accelerate progress appropriately.
- Raise the teachers' expectations of student potential to reach level 4 and watching student involvement more closely in challenging the higher achievers.
- Schedule regular physical education sessions when the auditorium refurbishments are complete.
- Outline the proportion of students expected to reach level 4 in English language arts, mathematics and science in preparing the goals for the Comprehensive Education Plan.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is a proficient school with well-developed features.**

Developing the whole child is at the heart of everything the school does. In response to this vision, the school has established the 'Competent Kids, Caring Classrooms' program through which it has successfully built strong relationships and high levels of social responsibility in the children. Students mix extremely well, helping each other to find resources, working collaboratively in class and valuing and respecting each others' views and cultures. The school council plays an active role in the life of the school. It has been involved in introducing a number of initiatives including 'Hats on Day', 'Pajama Day', organizing the 'Penny Harvest' and helping to plan 'No name calling week'. Values are part and parcel of the school's work and so are given equal importance with other subjects on the school's curriculum maps. The school is raising its expectations of students' academic achievement and in particular what its higher achievers can do. This is a new initiative and so not yet well established. The school has not yet put sufficient emphasis on looking at whether differences in boys' and girls' achievement is a trend or related to individual grades.

The principal is supported well by a team of teachers who have the same committed drive to develop each student's personal and academic skills and knowledge. As a result, the school knows each student by name and their particular personal and learning needs very well. Relationships are strong and so students are confident to ask an adult for help and advice about any academic or personal concern.

### How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient with well developed features.**

The school uses the data well from State and City tests and as a result has a secure understanding of the students' performance each year. Data is effectively evaluated to identify in which aspects each grade could improve. In addition, the school uses the considerable range of its own data to good effect to measure individual student's progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This ensures the needs of most students are met fully. Teachers use data to understand each student's achievements and this enables them to identify next steps in learning. A clear record sheet tracks the progress of every student in reading and this enables teachers to see at a glance which students are on track to reach or exceed their goals. Teachers create and use rubrics effectively to assess the levels each student has reached at the end of every writing unit.

Test data is analyzed closely to help the school evaluate how well different groups of students have performed and to compare whole school achievement with past years and with similar schools. The school uses the data from its own assessments particularly well to compare the progress of individual students across classes and grades and to put

suitable instructional programs in place. As a result, the school has a good understanding of the performance and progress of special education students, English language learners and other students whose progress is particularly under review. The school has not looked sufficiently closely and so has not addressed the lower achievement of boys compared to girls, and the difference in the greater number of students reaching level 4 in English than in mathematics.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient with well developed features.**

The administration and teachers meet regularly to set annual goals for each individual student’s performance and to identify the steps needed to reach those goals. Progress towards the goals is mapped out carefully for each student in every class and grade in reading, writing and mathematics. This system helps to identify those students who are on track to meet their goals or to put into place additional support for those students at risk. The regular meetings and detailed systems provide good attention to the needs of special education students and English language learners and so ensuring their progress. The school does not yet focus sufficiently on the progress of higher achieving students in order to challenge them to exceed the standard, especially in English.

Information from the teachers’ regular assessments, for example from the writing rubrics, is shared with students, so they know how to improve and with parents, so they can help at home. Opportunities to come into school on ‘Open School Night’, days when their children present their written published books and for workshops, help parents participate in their children’s academic lives. Parents are knowledgeable about school programs and what is expected of their children. Parents value the school’s good personal and academic knowledge of their children and recognize the emphasis on personal achievements as a strength of the school. This full partnership ensures all members of the school community are focused on improving ‘the whole child’s’ achievements.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient with well developed features.**

The curriculum is designed to emphasize students’ personal development alongside their mandatory academic work. Curriculum maps are evaluated annually and interim adjustments are made in response to ongoing data analysis. The visual arts program enriches the experiences of students in grades 3 through 5 through the good opportunities to play a musical instrument, to perform in the chorus at outside venues and in the local community, and to take part in the many dance workshops and events.

Teachers work together to plan instruction that fully meets needs of the majority of learners. Carefully recorded assessments of students’ attainment and skills help to inform this planning and so most students make good progress in classes. In some classes teachers use questions well to challenge higher achievers and make them think. However,

this challenge is not consistently applied in all classes because these students have not always been identified for attention. Students are involved in assessing their own work and so most have a clear understanding of how to improve. The writing program is one good example of this. Teachers make effective use of the Princeton Review to assess and set activities, which helps individual students build on their skills and ability to solve problems. Lessons are planned appropriately to interest students and as a result most are engaged in class. Students are respectful of each other, taking turns to talk, sharing resources and working together in groups on a shared problem solving activity.

The school uses its budget and staffing assignments well to support its goals. For example good staffing support for special education students and English language learners ensures they benefit from individualized programs in 'push in' and 'pull out' sessions. Schedules give good emphasis to students' personal development in addition to academic subjects. Physical education is not routinely scheduled partly because of refurbishments to the one room large enough to accommodate the activity.

Attendance is a high priority of the school and any unexplained or high level of absence is followed up immediately. Good attendance is celebrated and rewarded. The school continues to work hard with a small number of families whose children miss valuable instruction because they regularly do not get to school on time.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient with well developed features.**

The principal is well respected by staff, parents and students, who wonder about her ability to remember all their names! This reflects her strong belief that students' personal development is as important as their academic successes. She has a clearly defined vision for ensuring the school's programs fit each and every child's personal and academic needs and in selecting staff that share this vision. She recognizes that they could be even more successful by improving the performance and progress of higher achievers. She has raised staff awareness of this issue and the school is already beginning to put appropriate goals in place.

The principal, assistant principal and coaches visit classrooms regularly and check instruction is of good quality and that agreed programs are delivered effectively. The use of data to support progress is a particular focus of observations, especially for those students with specific needs. Insufficient attention is paid to the engagement of boys in English classes and to the level of challenge for potentially higher achievers. Good partnerships with support services enables special education students and English language learners to make good progress.

The full and varied professional development program supports the school's goals derived from student data and teacher's personal goals very well. Regular visits from outside consultants and partnerships with other organizations and schools are particularly beneficial in helping teachers refine and improve their practice. Teachers gain new ideas and methods of teaching by watching each other and teachers in other schools. Whenever teachers attend workshops outside school, they always share handouts and information to benefit the whole staff. Teachers plan together in teams to review and

revise practice in response to student data. Discussions are open and honest and focus on the impact of instruction on student progress.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient**

The school's goals in its Comprehensive Education Plan are set after an end of year overall evaluation of data and the performance of individual students. The data is then used in a focused way to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and instructional programs to see whether these need to be adjusted or replaced. Goals are revisited throughout the year, based on students' interim goals, and an overall evaluation leads to the next set of goals being agreed to. This ensures each following year builds systematically on the previous one. The school's long-term goals clearly show a year on year increase in its results in English language arts, mathematics and science. These focus on raising the proportion of students expected to reach the standards each year. As yet, the goals focus on students reaching the required standard. The Comprehensive Education Plan does not have goals which identify the students who have the potential of exceeding the standard by reaching level 4.

Grade teachers, the administration team and the academic intervention team meet regularly to discuss the effectiveness of the delivery of instructional programs. Comparisons are made of student progress across classrooms and grades to measure whether specific programs are making the impact required. Discussions tend to concentrate on the progress of special education students, English language learners and those students who, with help, could reach the expected level 3 standard. Insufficient focus is given to some students who potentially could reach level 4 and to boys' and girls' achievement. Programs and goals are adjusted or changed if they are deemed not to be effective. Teachers are involved in the discussions and therefore are able to act on the information from evaluations immediately.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: McKinley Park School (PS 127)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		X	

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	