



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Public School 197  
1599 East 22 Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11210**

**Principal: Ms Rosemarie Barbieri Nicoletti**

**Dates of review: October 10 - 11, 2006**

**Reviewer: Marilyn Lehmann**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 197 is an elementary school with students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. There are currently 438 students enrolled, of whom 25% are special education students and 26.3% are English language learners.

The school serves a diverse community, with 45.5% of the students being White, 24.3% Black, 17.6% Hispanic and 12.8% Asian or other races. Twenty-four different languages including Russian and Ukrainian are spoken in the school, and the percentage of students who are recent immigrants is greater than in similar and City schools. The percentage of students who are Title 1 eligible is also above that of similar and City schools.

The school's enrollment is currently below capacity because students are no longer being bused to the school from outside the zone. In addition many potential students are being educated locally in private Jewish religious schools. The school has opened two full-time pre-kindergarten classes this year in an attempt to attract students, and both classes have been filled.

The school shares the building with Intermediate School 381, to which most of the school's students go when they graduate.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Public School 197 uses a wide range of assessment data very well to measure its own performance and to inform all aspects of its planning.
- The principal works very effectively with the cabinet to promote a collaborative culture that supports high quality teaching and enables students to make good progress.
- The principal and assistant principal have created a climate in which staff and students are encouraged to reflect on their own practice as a basis for further improvement.
- Staff, students and parents view the school as collaborative and caring, and respond well to the very high expectations for work and behavior as well as the strong focus on learning.
- Assessment is used effectively to track individual students' progress and to ensure each student's program provides the right level of challenge.
- Students respond well to their teachers, are polite and show respect to adults and to each other.
- Special education students and English language learners are very well integrated into the school and are actively engaged in their own learning.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further develop partnerships with outside bodies to support the school's work in promoting progress.
- Refine monitoring of performance by ethnicity in order to identify and build on factors contributing to students' success.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

The school has shown a consistent increase in the State and City standardized test scores in recent years, and has been recognized as a 'High Performing/Gap Closing School' by the New York State Education Department. It has regularly exceeded the performance of similar schools in English language arts and mathematics at grades 3 through to 5, as well as performing well in social studies and science. Although the 2006 grade 5 results were lower than the previous year, the overall trend remains one of continuing improvement. At the same time the school has maintained a strong commitment to the arts with effective and greatly enjoyed programs in art and music.

The principal is working to develop purposeful links and collaborative activities with the intermediate school sharing the same building. A far-sighted example is the creation of a program for gifted and talented students running from pre-kindergarten through to grade 8. Initially, students from the intermediate school have worked as helpers in the library, and others have acted as reading mentors to students who have been identified as at risk.

The parents hold the school in high regard. They say that it is a safe and welcoming school where all the staff care about the students and see the welfare of their children as being of the utmost importance. Parents are also very positive about the successful intervention programs and the difference they make to their children's achievement.

### **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 well developed.**

This school makes very effective use of data. The principal and teachers constantly evaluate how well students are doing, what progress they have made, and what they need to do to advance in their learning. As a consequence, although it is disappointed with this year's grade 5 results, the school is able to show a steady trend of improvement over recent years. This overall improvement is the result of the school's determined focus on improving classroom practice and raising everyone's expectations of what the students can achieve. The drop in this year's scores is partly because the cohort of students was not as high achieving as the previous year's grade 5, and also because the tests contained different elements from those in previous tests. Nevertheless the school is rigorously analyzing this year's grade 5 results to identify and learn from the reasons for the lower scores.

The school uses a range of assessment data to monitor and improve students' progress. Students are carefully tracked using a range of objective tests such as the Early Childhood Language Arts Assessment System (ECLAS-2), the Developmental Reading Assessment system (DRA) and Everyday Math assessments. School-generated assessment methods include use of benchmark work examples, one-to-one conferencing with students,

observations and running records. In addition, the mathematics coach has created checklists for individual students with promotional criteria based on achieving 'secure' and 'developing secure' goals, which provide explicit records of what students know and can do.

Data is continuously updated and is used to evaluate how well students are doing, what progress they have made, and what they need to do to further improve. For example, teachers confer daily with students during reading, writing and mathematics workshops to gather, monitor and document each student's progress. Students are tested weekly in mathematics and social studies and bi-monthly in science. The results are used to inform planning. Assessment data is also used very well to identify students at risk of falling behind or in need of additional support, and to update knowledge of the progress of English language learners and special education students.

The school has not yet, however, begun to analyze the factors that impact on the progress of students from different ethnic backgrounds in order to ensure that every group makes the best possible progress.

**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 well developed.**

High expectations pervade the work of the school. The school leaders set the tone, but all staff work together to ensure the students are safe, happy and successful learners. Effective teamwork is evident in the classrooms and at all levels throughout the school.

Teachers use data from assessments and work portfolios to inform their planning for instruction. The administration analyzes results from regular in-house assessments in literacy, mathematics and social studies in order to ensure instruction is meeting students' needs. Information from Developmental Reading Assessment tracking sheets, which document both individual student and whole class progress, is also taken into account.

Plans and goals are discussed and agreed collaboratively in grade and cabinet meetings. Members of staff reflect on progress towards achieving these goals as part of planning sessions held in June each year. Programs of study for the coming year are agreed at these sessions, but the principal also encourages teachers to develop individual approaches within the agreed framework. These opportunities to review and plan collaboratively are valued by members of staff and make an important contribution to the ongoing development of excellent classroom practice.

Particular consideration is given to identifying students in need of improvement, and strategies to address obstacles are discussed in detail by the academic intervention services teachers before being implemented. Parents are involved in planning, especially with regard to individual education plans, and strategies are tried, revised, adapted and carefully monitored. As a result, students are effectively supported according to their needs and are enabled to make progress.

Almost all the students, whatever their background and starting point, make good progress in academic subjects. This is one reason why parents hold the school in very high regard.

Several parents speak very positively about successful intervention programs their children have experienced in both general and special education.

**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 well developed.**

Teachers plan very carefully together to make the curriculum varied, meaningful and challenging, and are very reflective about their work. Lessons are well planned, structured carefully and follow practiced routines and procedures that provide students with a coherent and purposeful experience. Classrooms echo the school's approach to learning. Students' work, resources and teaching prompts are displayed attractively and the rooms are set out in a way that encourages students to work collaboratively in pairs and groups.

Teachers have a very clear understanding of the ways in which they can help students to remain on task and learn effectively. In every classroom the students know what they are doing, and why they are doing it. Students are regularly presented with information or a task and then asked to discuss this with their partners. The resulting discussions are quiet and purposeful. The process and the dialogue clearly help to engage the students in their learning and in turn help to reinforce their understanding of what they have been asked to do. Students are trained and encouraged to review and level their own work and know what they have to do to improve.

Students behave well, partly because they are fully engaged in their learning, and partly because teachers and support staff have such clear expectations of them. This in turn allows teachers to make lessons more exciting and interesting because they are confident that students will respond appropriately.

The principal has used part of the school budget to fund instruction in the arts and physical education to support learning across other curriculum areas. Students clearly enjoy these lessons, which help promote self-esteem and confidence as well as subject-related skills. The principal is also committed to maintaining small class sizes in order to accelerate students' achievement and has targeted part of the budget to bring extra teachers into the school.

**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 well developed.**

The principal and assistant principal set the climate, pace and direction of the school and in doing so they get excellent support from the staff team. There is a clear sense of purpose in the building, with people getting on with tasks and, as a result, the school runs very smoothly. Professional discussions take place as a part of the normal routine of school life.

Members of staff have a high level of commitment to the school and its students. The principal and assistant principal regularly visit classrooms and provide constructive formal and informal feedback. They are perceived by staff as open and approachable, willing to

listen and to consider suggestions, and good at validating what members of staff do. Teachers share ideas and resources and work closely in a range of collaborative groups to evaluate students' progress and to plan next steps. Administrators, staff members and parents meet in various groups, including grade conferences, academic intervention services and cabinet meetings, to share data, plan and set goals. Teachers also meet in voluntary planning sessions before, during and after school.

The professional development of teachers is given high priority and the teachers continue to be active learners. The principal and assistant principal are themselves very reflective practitioners and have established a reflective learning environment throughout the school. The principal expects not only to challenge her staff, but for them to challenge and push her forward too. The school supports teachers effectively by providing a variety of well-targeted professional development opportunities both inside and outside the school. Members of staff are encouraged to share skills and good practice through collaborative discussion and by modeling or mentoring. Learning walks take place throughout the year and arrangements are made for inter-visitations. Coaches assist with lesson planning and model lessons. The principal is now looking to further differentiate professional development to meet individual needs even more closely.

Performance is continually being evaluated and new ways sought to improve learning and students' progress. The school cabinet consistently monitors practice across the school and uses the outcomes effectively to inform further planning. The school is working on developing stronger links with Intermediate School 381, and is also looking to further develop partnerships with other agencies to support the school's work in promoting 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 well developed.**

Regular and focused evaluations of student data are used very well in establishing whole-school goals and in assessing the degree to which improvement has been secured. In particular, reading tests and mathematics assessments are used effectively to make well-planned interventions, including moving students between classes, and to identify strengths as well as gaps in understanding. Weekly reading assessments, which test reading accuracy and comprehension, also provide an opportunity to monitor teachers' effectiveness as well as students' progress.

Planning for whole-school improvement is comprehensive and makes very good use of a wide range of data from tests, other assessments and both formal and informal evaluations of teachers' and students' work. Plans are revised regularly as a result of information from continuously updated data. Teachers are expected to monitor what they do, understand and evaluate what works, what does not work and make the changes necessary to improve outcomes. Comparisons of students' progress, both within and across classrooms as well as with other schools, are frequently considered. Detailed rubrics are used as a basis for regular leveling, and running records and promotional portfolios are carefully maintained and used with other data to make decisions about next steps. The school knows its own strengths as well as areas that it wishes to develop further, and is strongly committed to ongoing improvement.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Public School 197</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<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>			<b>X</b>
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>		<b>X</b>	
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>			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<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>	Ø	✓	+
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>	Ø	✓	+
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>	Ø	✓	+
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