



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Clarion School

Public School 205

**6701 20 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204**

Principal: Beth Grater

Dates of review: January 4 – 5, 2007

Reviewer: John Collings

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Clarion School serves approximately 960 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school receives Title 1 funding. Thirty percent of students are White, 12% are Black, 17% are Hispanic and 44% are Asian and other ethnic groups. The number of special education students is 147 (15%), which is a higher proportion than in similar or City schools. Nearly 30% of students are English language learners, which is a significantly higher proportion than in similar and City schools. A slightly higher proportion of students are recent arrivals into the country than in other schools. Many of these students were born in China, with others from Pakistan and Russia. The school attendance rate, at 93.9% in 2005, was slightly higher than that for similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- There is very good leadership by the principal who has a very clear understanding and vision of what has to be done and how.
- There is a very effective cabinet who share the principal's enthusiasm and drive to improve the school.
- There are some high-quality assessment procedures which are being used increasingly effectively to match work to student needs.
- The principal and the assistant principals use existing data effectively to identify how well groups and individuals are doing.
- Good quality instruction engages students and, as a result, the majority of them are challenged appropriately.
- Students enjoy school and learning, feel safe, behave very well, respect their teachers and want to learn.
- The school uses the extended day very well to provide a wide range of courses to aid students' learning.
- Staff morale is good and teachers are generally enthusiastic and want to do the best for their students.
- Professional development is well focused on the aims of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Make greater use of the collected data to ensure work is more consistently and precisely matched to the needs of the students.
- Use the available data more systematically to identify year-on-year progress of different groups, classes and individuals.
- Continue the professional development program to support teachers in planning lessons that regularly have high expectations and are differentiated to meet the wide range of performance in their classes.
- Ensure that the impact of the professional development program on student outcomes continues to be monitored systematically.
- Use assessment data to set challenging end-of-year targets for individuals and groups of students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal is in her third year at the school. Since her appointment she has created an effective cabinet. They work very well together through discussion and a mutual respect for each other's ideas and expertise. Since the principal's appointment, there has been increasing use of data to inform instruction and this is having a significant effect on ensuring that instruction is more accurately matched to student needs. This is helping to raise the students' achievements, but is still in its early stages. The school's aim is to use data more effectively to inform instruction. This is to ensure that lessons are planned to meet the learning needs of individuals and groups of pupils within whole classes. This is a focus of professional development for staff.

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.

Over the last few years the school has collected an increasing range of data about student performance. This combines State and City data with the school's own internal assessment information such as the records on student performance in mathematics and English language arts. The school uses this range of data well to analyze progress, particularly at cabinet level, but data is used less consistently within classroom planning.

The school is aware of the overall performance of differing grades and classes but is not yet using the data sufficiently systematically to identify whether sub groups of students, such as boys and girls or different ethnic groups, are making the expected progress. Data is, however, well used to identify special education students and those falling behind grade levels so that they can be assigned to support programs. These are effectively implemented through academic intervention services personnel and other teaching staff. English language learners are also identified early so that appropriate programs and intervention strategies can be put in place for them. The school uses the Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System, supplemented by additional teacher assessments, to carefully gauge the level of basic skills of the younger students and hence inform instruction.

The school has noted how its results compare with those of similar schools and has tracked the rising trends in reading and mathematics scores. It is aware that it needs to analyze data in further detail, however, to ensure that it can measure student performance and progress based on a more rigorous comparison with similar schools and the school's own past performance.

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.

The principal has created an enthusiastic, talented cabinet to help her to improve the performance of students in the school. They collaborate well and are becoming increasingly adept at analyzing data to identify the most significant needs for the school, selecting the strategies required and then providing the professional development to deliver them. The principal’s high expectations underpin the long-term goals that are set. These are discussed at cabinet and faculty level so that there is a shared awareness of the school’s ambitions.

Data is being used well to identify those individuals, such as special education students and English language learners, who require additional support and to establish effective intervention programs for them. Collaboration between teachers and support staff ensure that suitable targets and next learning steps are established for these students. The school is aware that the use of data to set goals at classroom level is variable and has established a helpful program to tackle inconsistencies in assessment. This involves teachers in the scrutiny of students’ work during grade meetings to compare and moderate judgments. The practice has resulted in more accurate assessment and a clearer understanding of what it is that students need to do to improve. Peer assessment, where students are encouraged to talk to other students about their work and suggest improvements, has also been introduced. Initial evaluations are encouraging. Teachers are increasingly using extension material and/or the next grade standards to challenge students who have met grade level early, although practice is not yet consistent across all classes.

The high expectations of the school are effectively communicated to parents and caregivers. Students are aware of what is expected of them, although some say that the work is not sufficiently challenging for them.

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.

Overall the school curriculum meets the mandated requirements. There are some good examples of imaginative approaches and appropriately modified programs which meet individual needs and capture the imagination of the students. This inspires students to perform well and fulfill the school’s ambitions for them.

Teachers are hard-working. They are dedicated to their students and are aware of their accountability for the progress that they make. Teachers’ planning is largely based on the expected standards for the grade and the use of data to differentiate instruction to meet the range of needs of students within the class is variable. Current steps to strengthen assessment and goal-setting are having a positive impact but implementation remains somewhat inconsistent.

Resources and staffing are appropriately directed towards the needs of students,

particularly special education students and English language learners. Scheduling is similarly planned in alignment with the school's priorities.

Students are well behaved and enjoy their classes. They like school and feel that they make progress, although some would appreciate more challenge. Students value the additional before-, during- and after-school programs and feel that the teachers work hard to support them. They feel safe and able to approach adults with any issues of concern. Good attendance is a high priority for the school. Procedures for following up absences are rigorous.

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 well-respected principal has made some significant strides in moving the school forward and has the capacity to effect further change. She adopts a range of effective strategies for appointing staff, paying particular attention to the degree to which applicants understand the importance of data and are willing to take responsibility for the progress and care of the students.

The cabinet has a very clear agenda that the use of data to inform instruction is central to the school's climate and the drive to improve achievement. The team is also aware that this is not as well developed as it could be and is addressing the issue through carefully targeted professional development. In addition to the work scrutiny exercises, staff are being trained to use computer programs to analyze and interrogate assessment data to identify where progress is not as good as it should be. Literacy and mathematics coaches are running model lessons and sessions to show how to use data to plan well differentiated lessons. These programs are having a positive impact on practice. For example, some teachers are using support packages effectively to challenge level three students to achieve level four standards. An additional strategy to strengthen differentiation has been to hold morjoint professional development sessions for general and special education staff.

In addition to the formal observations undertaken by the principal, both she and the assistant principals make frequent informal visits to classrooms, often on a daily basis. Teachers value the feedback and use the comments to reflect on their practice. There are good induction procedures for new teachers. Where necessary, any additional support for other staff is well structured through model lessons, parallel teaching and the support of paraprofessionals. Grade meetings provide useful opportunities for teachers to be mutually supportive through the sharing and evaluation of good practice.

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Effective use is made of a wide range of support services, particularly for special education students, to meet the school's goals. There is also a good range of opportunities for students to broaden their experiences through before-, during- after- school classes, dance and music sessions and visits. Parents think these programs are good but would like a broader representation of parent groups to be involved in the school.

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 carefully monitors its interventions against its stated aims. For example, the improvement in differentiated instruction is improving student performance. It is also reviewing its push-in model for English language learners to see if this improves their progress sufficiently for them to be able to join mainstream classes on a permanent basis. Internal monitoring suggests that the intervention is having a positive effect but its overall effectiveness will be reviewed when the grade level assessments are known.

Data is systematically reviewed and comparisons of the student performance between classes and grades are made. Reasons for differences are discussed at grade meetings so that the best practice can be shared and support given where appropriate. For example, this often leads to changes in instruction or specific support for individuals. The school's data on student performance in mathematics and English language arts is reviewed on a monthly basis and, when necessary, instructional programs are modified.

Overall progress towards the school's goals is monitored and then reviewed in regular cabinet meetings and at grade meetings where appropriate. The school's use of data is being continually reviewed and the school is adopting new procedures to analyze the data more rigorously to track individual rates of progress year on year. This data is not yet being used to identify end of year targets for individuals or groups of students based on their prior performance. The school is very effective at identifying the needs of and then supporting special education students.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Clarion School (PS 205)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

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.	∅	✓	+
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"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 		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"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 		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"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 		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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		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.

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.	∅	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

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.	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
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
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.	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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
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.	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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	