



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Sarah Anderson School

Public School 9

**100 West 84th Street
New York
NY 10024**

Principal: Diane Brady

Dates of review: April 23 – 24, 2007

Reviewer: John Collings

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well
What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Sarah Anderson school is in its 3rd year of accepting students for kindergarten through grade 5 where it previously accepted students for kindergarten through grade 8. It has approximately 490 students. It also administers within the school, 'The Renaissance Program' and 'Gifted and Talented' programs. There are approximately 10% special education students and 7% English language learners. The school is not eligible for Title 1 funding. The student population comprises approximately of 12% Black, 30% Hispanic and the remainder White and other ethnic group. At around 95%, attendance is significantly above City averages and other similar schools.

This is an Empowerment school. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- This is a high achieving school for all students including special education students, English language learners, general education students as well as gifted and talented students.
- The school has received recognition from the State Education Department for closing the gap in achievement levels for students in traditionally low performing categories.
- The staff is well lead, cohesive, collaborative, mutually supportive and fully committed to school goals, which are reviewed, communicated to, and understood by all staff.
- There is a strong commitment to the workshop model of differentiated teaching to improve student learning which is underpinned by professional development.
- There is strong parent teacher association support that funds assistant teachers in every classroom.
- All students of all abilities receive an education best suited to their needs because there is good use of data to identify student performance and progress.
- Very good cross-curricular links and partnerships exist with, for example, the Metropolitan Museum, Carnegie Hall and the New York City Ballet.
- There is very good mutual respect between pupils, and pupils and teachers which results in very good attendance, behavior and learning and high student involvement.
- The principal and assistant principal are well respected and inspire teachers and pupils.
- The school maintains visual displays, presentation of student work and its building to create a clean and stimulating learning environment.

What the school needs to improve

- Use the significant amount of data available in the school to map the value added progress of students more precisely.
- Use the value added model to identify groups making the best and least progress in order to identify if particular groups need increased support.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

This is a high performing school where data is used very well for identifying the progress of its students. It uses this data to create the most effective learning environment for the wide range of students' abilities in the school.

The school is very well lead by the principal and the school leadership team. Staff collaborate, work in teams and are reflective upon their instructional practice. This results in a school that has very high expectations for all students to progress and to make the very best progress they can. This is implemented through good use of differentiated teaching, very good use of cross-curricular planning and the use of good data to inform instruction. This has resulted in the school receiving an award in recognition for its ability to improve the performance of students in traditionally low performing categories. It has impressive links with prestigious organizations and the impressive use of assistant teachers in all classrooms makes a significant contribution to the good progress students make. There is a very high level of mutual respect between students, and students and teachers.

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.

The school uses available data and a significant amount of its own data to provide a very clear and objective understanding of the performance and progress of each student. It aggregates this data very effectively to identify the performance and progress of each class and grade level. Class teachers increasingly use data to inform their instruction.

The school also aggregates data well to identify the performance and progress of ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students. It monitors students entering the school through the No Child Left Behind program as a separate group and has shown that these students make similar if not better progress than others students in the school. This is reflected in the State Education Department recognition of the school for closing the gap in achievement levels for students in traditionally low performing categories.

The school is a high attaining school even when compared with similarly high attaining kindergarten through 5 schools. It uses a good value added model to identify whether a particular cohort improves over expected progress as it moves from grade to grade. It is refining this model to identify more precisely the value added improvements of individual students, classrooms, grade level, academic subjects, ethnic groups and other groupings of interest to the school. This careful attention to reviewing data and continually trying to refine its procedures makes a significant contribution to constructing a curriculum and lessons that are very well matched to student need and which are making a significant impact on student learning.

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.

The school's leadership team uses data proactively to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-term improvement. This is a collaborative process involving all members of staff within their respective teaching teams. There are clear expectations and time frames in which to implement and attain expectations.

School goals focus systematically on the methodologies, for example, the workshop model and differentiation, to support teachers in implementing the very high expectations the school has for students. These expectations are compiled from analysis of data to create targets for individual students. These are then aggregated very effectively to create expectations for classrooms, grade levels and academic subjects, and are further refined to meet the needs of special education, general education or gifted and talented students. Systematic and regular monitoring identifies patterns and trends and any variations between expectations and subsequent performance. This careful attention to detail makes a significant impact on the progress students make. Particular attention is given to identifying and supporting those students in the greatest need of improvement.

Expectations are very high, not only of students but also of all who are involved in the school. This creates a very strong climate of learning. There is a significant amount of information communicated to parents and caregivers through newsletters, internet and other material and they are regularly invited to the school to discuss their child's performance and how their child might improve. The information is significant in ensuring that expectations are challenging yet within the students' abilities. Data is continually revised to ensure students are meeting expectations or whether expectations need to be revised.

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

This area of the school's work is well developed.

This is an empowerment school and therefore has significant flexibility over how it implements curriculum. It has used this flexibility very well to make the curriculum challenging and very well matched to individual student need. There is a significant amount of cross-curricular planning to enable students to apply and consolidate knowledge, understanding and skills learned in one subject in other subjects. Clear structures and planning teams ensure that work is progressive, differentiated, challenging and does not include what is already known.

Teachers are held accountable for the planning and instruction within their classes and teams. A particular strength is the very good use of the workshop model to differentiate instruction within lessons to challenge students in meeting the teacher's expectations. These expectations are well based on students' prior attainment.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling are used very effectively to create a challenging learning environment, well matched to student need. Data is used very well to ensure all students are very well supported, particularly those in the greatest need of improvement. This is implemented through good use of paraprofessionals, parents and, in particular,

through the commitment and support of the parent teacher association which has put an assistant teacher into every classroom, which significantly enhances student learning.

The high student staff ratio ensures not only that students are well supported but they are also fully engaged in learning. Students find lessons engaging, stimulating, challenging, fun and they want to learn. Students enjoy school, feel safe and trust adults. Relationships between all adults and students are excellent. Attendance is well above the City average and that found in similar schools.

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.

Considerable attention is given to the selection of staff. All teachers are at least dual certified, that is, in addition to being generally certified teachers they also have to be certified to teach either special education students or gifted and talented students. In addition to giving a demonstration lesson at interview teachers are also expected to give examples of where they have used data to improve student performance, a commitment to differentiated instruction, and have very high expectations of students.

There is a very strong emphasis on the use of professional development to implement the workshop model of differentiation to which the whole school is committed. The school has identified that this particular model of instruction is very effective for the range of students that it has. There is a significant amount of mutual support between teachers through staff inter-visitations and training within and outside the school to develop and refine the use of this model of instruction. Mutual support and differentiation are well integrated in the school climate.

The principal and assistant principal are in and around the school and classrooms daily, monitoring lessons through classroom observation. The focus for improving instruction is the better implementation of the workshop model of differentiation. Teachers are given regular opportunities and support to enable them to collaborate, for example, opportunities to work together in the 90 minute professional development sessions and learning walks. Teachers also have common planning time, which they use to enable them to differentiate a range of expectations for groups of students within their lessons, firmly based on prior achievement, which is improving instruction significantly.

Teachers plan very effectively within grade teams and, where appropriate, across and between grades. They continuously revise their plans in the light of on-going assessment to ensure future lessons challenge all pupils within their classes regardless of their prior achievement. Teachers want to do the very best possible for their students. They support each other in identifying the most effective way to improve instruction and use what has been learned to drive improvement. This self critical and mutually supportive climate has a significant impact on the progress and performance of students.

The principal is highly respected by students, parents and teachers. She is innovative and wants the very best for her school. She therefore has very high expectations of her staff and students. She has a very strong commitment to the workshop model of instruction and has implemented the change to this method of instruction very effectively. The school runs very smoothly, there is very good communication particularly with parents and procedures within the school are clear and followed.

The very strong parent teachers association raises a significant amount of money to, for example, fund the assistant teacher program. The school also has a significant amount of other support for students through strong links with the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, Carnegie Hall and the New York City Ballet. The school uses an appropriate range of support services to ensure that students and, where necessary, parents have the support they need.

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

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school has very clear goals, which are identified in the Comprehensive Education Plan and in the principal's personal review and are securely based on data. The aims and objectives for reaching these goals across the whole school and within each subject are clearly identified. The school makes good use of objective data where appropriate to measure success towards these goals, which are appropriate and challenging. It is very well aware of its strengths and areas for improvement.

The comparison of student progress within and across classrooms is rigorous, frequent, systematic and self-critical. This allows the school to modify expectations in the light of on-going formal and informal assessments. This continually reflective process is well integrated into the climate of the school. The Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's personal review are used as working documents to review and reflect on progress towards its goals.

A particular strength of the school is the way that it links any changes in its goals to professional development, ensuring staff is supported appropriately and that goals are implemented effectively. This ensures full participation and ownership of initiatives. For example, teachers received additional support when using Princeton Review data, cross-curricular planning and differentiating instruction.

The school has been particularly responsive where data has challenged its own assumptions about groups of students making better or less progress than they thought. The school has then used this evidence to modify the curriculum to meet student needs through greater subject integration and addressing the development of skills.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Sarah Anderson School (PS 9)	∅	✓	+
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 instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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 improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
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