



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Park Terrace Academy

Intermediate School 018

**4124 9 Avenue
New York
NY 10034**

Principal: Aurea Porrata-Doria

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Reviewer: Jeff Plumb

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Intermediate School 18 provides education for 471 students from kindergarten through grade 8. Ninety-three percent of the students are from Hispanic backgrounds and the majority from homes which have Spanish as their first language. Over a half of the students are English language learners. There are a significant number of students who are new arrivals to the country and the school, mainly from the Dominican Republic. Nearly 4% of students are Black, 2.1% are White and the remaining 1.7% are Asian or from other backgrounds. Kindergarten through 4th grade is taught in dual language classes. There is a self-contained class for special education students and an inclusion class in grade 7.

The percentage of students with Title 1 eligibility is 90%, which is much higher than is usually found throughout the City. Attendance is higher than similar schools or in the City as a whole. The school is located on four floors in a well maintained building. The school experienced considerable turbulence when it was required to admit students in grades 3 through 8 in 2005 as part of a re-structuring program. It has proved difficult to recruit and retain teachers for the grade 7 and 8 classes. This is a significant barrier to learning and progress for these students. The school is linked to the Teachers College for professional development and the shaping of specific reading and writing instruction programs.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides effective leadership and ensures that all students become rounded young people with the skills required to become lifelong learners.
- Good use is made of data to align instruction programs to meet the needs of special education students and English language learners.
- The guidance counselor provides excellent support for all students.
- The family climate of the school encourages students to attend regularly, become keen learners, respect each other and behave well.
- The literacy and numeracy coaches use data effectively to set challenging targets to raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Gifted students are supported and encouraged to sit the entrance exam for specialist high schools.
- The dual language curriculum planned for kindergarten through grade 4 develops students' confidence as speakers, readers and writers.
- The after-school club raises student performance towards the expected level in English language arts and is beginning to raise achievement.
- Partnership with parents to support their children's learning is very effective.
- Effective teamwork from kindergarten through grade 6 and at class level results in good collaborative planning.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the use of data to raise standards of achievement across the school, but particularly in English language arts, mathematics and science for grade 7 and 8 students.
- Improve the breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum for grade 7 and 8 students, particularly curriculum planning in science and art.
- Ensure consistency and challenge in the instruction programs for grade 7 and 8 students.
- Develop all teachers so that they become confident in the analysis of performance data and use it to improve their instruction and raise achievement.
- Rigorously monitor all teachers to ensure that they use data to monitor student progress and adjust their instruction programs to raise achievement.
- Continue to develop dual language classes throughout grades 5 to 8.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Since her appointment five years ago the principal has managed significant change effectively and created a school where the vast majority of staff love their work and children are keen to learn. She is determined to address the deficiencies in grades 7 and 8. Most teachers ceaselessly reflect on what works well for each student and why. They realign their instructional programs based on this reflection and questioning. The principal is passionate in her pursuit of excellence and there is a culture throughout the school of aiming high. The principal knows her cabinet very well and delegates effectively.

The cabinet and extended senior team are not complacent. They pose searching questions about the effectiveness of actions to drive up standards. They seek out the key differences these actions make for individuals and groups of students. The school is at an early stage of development in analyzing and using data to drive up standards, but there is some evidence of actions driven by data analysis leading to raised achievement through the school. The realignment of instructional programs for students who experience the most difficulty in learning is very good. Programs for special education students and those at a very early stage of learning to speak English are good. The family atmosphere in this school is outstanding and greatly appreciated by students and their parents. The tailor-made flexible plans for the most vulnerable students build their confidence and raise their achievement. The commitment to enabling high-achieving students to fly with their quest for learning is also evident.

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.

An extensive range of test scores and teacher assessments is gathered to enable teachers to build a detailed picture of the students they teach, except in grades 7 and 8 where data gathering and use is less well established. An effective system has been put in place to track students' progress as they move through the school in literacy and mathematics. The coaches for English language arts and mathematics have been trained to support teachers in interpreting this data and understanding its purpose in raising achievement. The principal is particularly adept at using data to take decisive actions about shaping suitable learning programs for students at risk, but this does not yet extend to all other groups of students. A mandatory after-school club for students on the border of a high level 2 and a low level 3 in English language arts has been particularly successful in raising their achievement. Data is used less well by teachers in grades 7 and 8 to plan flexibly to meet the needs of the students in their classes, and students are not progressing at the same rate as students in the other grades.

The individualized education plan teacher is particularly successful at gathering data about special education students to shape intervention programs to raise their achievement.

Rigorous monitoring of these programs ensures that they are regularly modified to maximize their benefit for the most vulnerable students. The evaluation of the school's own data to assess and inform instructional programs for those beginning to learn English language is well developed. Consequently, these students gain in confidence well and become effective communicators.

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

Effective organizational structures are in place to promote collaborative planning to develop assessment and the curriculum. The teachers of the paired dual-language classes support each other and maintain a consistent approach to setting goals for the students in their classes. These goals are shared with students. Key teachers for students who are vulnerable and at risk meet regularly with the guidance counselor and principal and use gathered assessment data to review and to modify their personal instruction plans. Discussion in these planned meetings is robust and results in actions to raise achievement for students. Parents are actively involved in supporting the school in setting goals for their children. They say, 'We are delighted in the way the school involves us in our children's education'. Students of all performance levels are consulted about their targets for improvement, except in science in grades 7 and 8. Effective use of data has been made to set a whole-school goal to raise standards in writing.

The consistency in use of data for subject and lesson planning from kindergarten through grade 6 is less secure in grades 7 and 8. This is because the planning for science and art is weaker in this area of the school, as is lesson planning. The implementation of the 'Reader/Writer Program' develops the literacy skills of students in grades 1 through 6 very well. As recognized by the school, this intervention strategy is not so suitable for raising achievement in reading and writing in grades 7 and 8. There is a commitment, shared by all cabinet members, to find the key that develops a thirst for learning in all students. The school has come a long way since its reorganization as a kindergarten through to 8 school but is not complacent. It recognizes that this aspect of its work requires improvement for grade 7 and 8 students.

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.

The school has been innovative and creative in developing a curriculum in kindergarten through grade 7 which enables students to think critically and solve life problems. There is a strong focus on the relevance and application of skills. The curriculum promotes enjoyment in learning for the majority of the students, but a few grade 7 and 8 students say that aspects of their curriculum, such as science, are flat and fail to engage them in meaningful learning. A magical ingredient in the curriculum planning is the way in which data is used to construct tailor-made individual plans for students who experience the most significant barriers to learning. The 'Be Excited About Reading' project entuses students to read for enjoyment. This is supported by targeted funding. Teachers are held to

account for their instruction, but they are at an early stage of using data to differentiate tasks and activities in lessons.

This is an inclusive school. The school is particularly successful in the way in which it realigns curriculum and the way learning is organized for students who find learning difficult. Considerable resource has gone into developing an inclusion class in Grade 7. Very able pupils are put into a class with special educational students to help improve their achievement and both are appropriately challenged. The principal is determined to find funds to enhance the curriculum and improve the quality of instruction through the school. Good programs are in place to enable students to experience the arts; they enjoy the after-school programs for dance, musical theatre and sport.

Challenge and high expectations are typical of instruction in kindergarten through grade 6. In some grade 7 and 8 classes, activities are not sufficiently challenging. Students in grade 8 become frustrated by being asked to copy large chunks of text in science lessons when they would like hands-on experience of conducting investigations. Overall, therefore instruction is proficient.

The school achieves good personal and social development with students. Procedures for promoting good attendance and reducing lateness are very good. Attitudes to learning are overwhelming positive, except in some of the older students' classes. Students feel safe at school and can turn to the guidance counselor with any problems they may have. They say, 'She is like second mum'.

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.

Since the re-organization, the principal has had difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers for the grade 7 and 8 students. Throughout the rest of the school, she has built a team of staff who flourish under her leadership. Considerable thought has gone into the few appointments of staff she has been able to make. These teachers have contributed well to students' learning. The teacher responsible for managing data enthuses about her work and is helping to drive up performance with her analysis and evaluation. The new assistant principal has a clear vision and plan for what must be achieved to lift the quality of provision for grade 7 and 8 students. There is a commitment to creating a culture 'where all children can learn'. Core administrators and teachers are bilingual and this benefits Spanish speaking students who are new to the school, often with no prior experience of English language learning.

Professional development is satisfactory. A good link has been established with the Teachers' College. Staff developers visit regularly and work collaboratively with the school to produce plans and resources to raise standards in reading and writing. Professional development is closely aligned to the school's goals and priorities for improvement.

The principal and cabinet members know the strengths and weaknesses in instruction. The literacy and numeracy coaches visit classes regularly and demonstrate good lessons. There is a thorough program of lesson observations with good feedback to teachers about how they can improve their instructional practice. The principal listens to staff and involves them in decision-making. The school runs smoothly. Its procedures are continually evaluated and the opinions of all members of staff are sought and valued. Collaboration

and team work benefits the most vulnerable students. High fliers are also targeted and challenged, as evidenced by the commitment of the guidance counselor and academic intervention team to ensure that students capable of passing an entrance examination to the specialist high schools regularly attend the Saturday academy school. School leaders admit that some things are not working and are prepared to make mid-course adjustments based on objective evidence. The principal has the capacity to effect change.

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.

This is a reflective school and self-review lies at the heart of its culture. There is a commitment to equip students with the skills they require for lifelong learning. The school is at an early stage of analyzing and using data to drive up performance, and some of the actions taken are at too early a stage to evaluate fully. However, data is being used to make decisions about groupings to accelerate student learning. It is used to set targets for individual and groups of students, and consequently they know what they need to do to improve their work.

Special education students have their individual education plans reviewed and revised regularly based on the data about how well they are progressing. Good use is made of data to realign instructional programs for English language learners at a very early stage of learning to speak English.

The Comprehensive Education Plan provides a reasonable analysis of data to demonstrate where gains have been made and which groups of students need to be targeted to accelerate progress. The goals set are not always specific or data-led, so it is not always sufficiently clear how the outcomes from action plans will be measured or how their impact on students' progress will be evaluated.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Park Terrace Academy (IS 018)	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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 its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its 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	