



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Anderson School

Public School 334

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

Principal: Brian Culot

Dates of review: March 28- 29, 2007

Reviewer: Bruce Berry

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

The Anderson School is a City-wide gifted and talented empowerment elementary and middle school with 497 students in kindergarten to grade 8. The ethnic breakdown is 62% White, 19% Asian, 10% Hispanic and 9% Black. There are 1% special education students. The school opened in September 2005.

The attendance figure in 2006 was 96.1%, well above that of similar and City schools. The attendance figure for this academic year is 97.7% to date.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides high quality strategic leadership which is having a positive impact on raising achievement.
- The cabinet and teachers are a united team that sets challenging goals to achieve continuous school improvement.
- There are very good systems in place for using a variety of data sources for tracking student progress.
- High quality instruction practice is leading to high achievement levels for students.
- Teachers work well in teams to plan instruction activities and to create innovative ways of providing further interest and challenge for students.
- There are very good accelerated instruction programs and students achieve high grades in State and City tests.
- There is a strong caring and achievement centered culture in the school.
- Parents and students have a high regard for the work of the school and of the high expectations generated by the teachers.
- The school is an orderly community where students enjoy learning.
- The school environment is enriched by the celebration of students' achievements through high quality colorful displays and lively and entertaining practical performances.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop the music program through the expansion of instrumental offerings.
- Continue to expand students' academic and cultural opportunities by further enhancing the excellent and extensive existing enrichment program.
- Continue to expand professional development opportunities appropriate for teachers of gifted and talented students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal has a clear knowledge of the school's present and future development needs to continue the improvement of the school and maintain the high achievement levels. He and the assistant principal provide high quality strategic leadership which is maintaining high standards and is driving the school improvement agenda. The teachers work as a united team to provide high quality challenging instruction which creates enthusiastic and energized students with a hunger for learning. As an empowerment school, periodic data is used to provide ongoing progress tracking of achievement levels and data for planning intervention strategies where appropriate. Parents and students have very high praise for quality of the education and the care provided by the school. The school environment is enriched by the celebration of students' achievements through high quality colorful displays and lively and entertaining practical performances. The expansive curriculum and the wide range of enrichment activities provide an academic, social and cultural experience which brings education to life in a challenging, energetic and enjoyable way.

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.

Very good systems are in place for using a variety of data for tracking student progress. There is a consistent approach to the use of periodic assessment data across the school, with all classrooms having data portfolios for each subject and each student. In reading, students' levels are measured using some or all of four different systems which are correlated to identify the reading level, which is tracked and displayed using a running record. Differentiated reading libraries give students choice from a range of books at each level and the majority of students are reading well above their grade level. Conference notes, student portfolios and rubrics for writing provide data about the progress in writing. Writing is a focus in all subjects across the curriculum and there are many existing and interesting projects to provide students with opportunities to extend their reading and writing skills. Data from regular testing is used to track progress in mathematics and most students are working above their grade level. Similar tracking systems exist for science and social studies. State test levels, gains reports and Princeton Review data is analyzed and outcomes are correlated to give high quality information of progress of individuals, groups, classrooms, grades and of the whole school. The school's very good use of data, the excellent instruction practice and the high quality curriculum are leading to very high standards of achievement being maintained throughout the school.

There are very good systems in place for addressing the needs of special education students. Teachers track progress against all identified areas of the individual education plan and the guidance counselor works with teachers to maintain an oversight of progress. External and internal services are provided where appropriate. There are no English

language learners in the school. The school tracks the performance of different ethnic groups and is researching the impact of learning styles on performance and progress.

The school admits students who are designated at pre-kindergarten age as gifted and talented from all parts of the City and maintains the same student population from kindergarten to grade 8. The high quality teaching and extensive curriculum offered leads to very high levels of achievement in all subjects. Grade 8 students achieve very high pass rates in three Regents tests. The school compares its own performance with that of other schools and regularly tracks its own performance throughout the year and from year to year. The results in state and Regents tests are very high and students in grade 8 gain places in specialized high schools.

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 cabinet and teachers are a united team that sets challenging goals to achieve continuous school improvement. The Comprehensive Education Plan for next year has already been developed and many of the plans and goals are already being used within the school. The principal’s review also provides clearly defined and challenging plans and goals for the school to maintain high levels of achievement. Students have clear and challenging goals which are an integral part in the planning of all curriculum units of work. Students are fully involved in goal setting and the evaluation of progress towards their goals using an “I am learning” and “I can” approach for the defined learning objectives. All plans and goals focus on maintaining high levels of achievement for students through quality instruction and the expansive curriculum.

Excellent planning and goal setting permeates all levels of the school and is leading to the school maintaining very high standards of achievement. High quality instruction and the creative curriculum provide the gifted and talented students with a wide range of challenging and interesting activities. As a result, student progress is very high, with most students operating at least one grade level above their actual grade. There are very sophisticated data tracking systems of student progress which are used to identify students in greatest need of improvement. Gains reports, reading records, conferencing and outcomes of testing are used to identify students in greatest need of improvement. Using the outcomes of the data, grade level teachers collaborate to review student progress and plan interventions.

Parents and students have a high regard for the work of the school and of the high expectations generated by the teachers. High expectations are generated through high quality instruction and an expansive, challenging and exciting curriculum. Parents receive regular updates on the progress of their children and are invited to parent and teacher conferences. Parents are able to contact the principal or teachers at any time to discuss any academic or social issues. The very high level of drive and motivation of all members of the school community ensures that plans and goals create high quality instruction and varied curriculum opportunities to maintain students’ motivation, interest and achievement levels.

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.

The imaginative curriculum is a major factor in generating high levels of interest, motivation and achievement for the students. Curriculum maps, unit planning, rubrics and goals are developed by teams of teachers at grade and subject level. A workshop and balanced literacy approach is used throughout the school in English language arts. In mathematics, Everyday Mathematics is used for kindergarten to grade 5, with a high school program used in grades 6 to 8. Science, social studies, music, art and gym also provide high levels of challenge and interest for the students. Students in grades 6 and 7 study physical and life science and grade 8 students study earth science. Selected students in grade 8 take mathematics A, earth science and Spanish Regents tests, with a pass rate of over 90% in all subjects. Each grade has an extra curriculum focus which provides very good opportunities to expand students' knowledge, understanding, skills and interests. Partnerships exist with a wide range of organizations which provide innovative projects involving music, art, theater, marine biology, environment, law and architecture. There are plans to further develop the music program through the expansion of instrumental offerings.

Teachers' accountability for instruction and student progress is providing high levels of student achievement. Data outcomes drive the planning, differentiation and interventions for student instruction. Rigorous assessment is used to provide classroom data portfolios for tracking student progress in all areas of the curriculum. Cabinet review progress at all levels to ensure that high achievement levels in the school are maintained. Budget, staffing and scheduling is planned based on the outcomes of data and the curriculum requirements to maintain high levels of achievement. Priorities for the next academic year include hiring a science coordinator, retaining the services of the coaches, employing a full time mathematics teacher for grades 5 and 6 and other priorities which will help to maintain the high achievement in the school.

Quality instruction practice is leading to high levels of engagement and achievement for students. The accelerated instruction programs are leading to students achieving high grades in State and City tests. The instructional creativity demonstrated by teachers is giving high levels of pace, progress, enthusiasm, interest and fun for students as learners. There is a strong caring, respectful and achievement centered culture in the school. Students are confident in approaching any teacher about any academic or social issue. There are good procedures for monitoring attendance which is leading to very high levels of attendance. Parents phone school and send notes to explain absences. School also phones home and all incoming and outgoing calls are logged to provide the information required to update all attendance records.

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.

Very good procedures for the selection of staff include teaching a demo lesson and an interview, which tests candidates' knowledge of instruction, differentiation and the use of

data in tracking student progress. There is a strong professional development program which is driven by the outcomes of data. In summer, the previous program is reviewed and plans agreed for the coming year. At the start of the new academic year, personal professional development and instructional goals are agreed with each teacher. The principal is planning to continue to expand professional development opportunities appropriate for teachers of gifted and talented students.

Formal and informal lesson observations are carried out by the principal and assistant principal with written and verbal feedback given as appropriate. The instruction observations and the excellent instruction practice are having an impact on maintaining the high achievement in the school. Teachers undertake instruction observations in order to share good practice. Teachers work well in teams to plan instruction activities and to create innovative ways of providing further interest and challenge for students. Grade, cross-grade and subject teams undertake planning to provide a consistent approach to instruction, differentiation, assessment and goal setting.

The principal has the respect of all members of the school community and has the capacity to continue the drive for continuous improvement. The cabinet's quality leadership and management have galvanized the whole school community and are resulting in high levels of achievement being maintained. The school is a very orderly community where students enjoy learning. Procedures are known and followed by students and staff.

The school has a wide range of partnerships which provide exciting and engaging opportunities for students to widen their academic, social and cultural experiences. Students take part in a variety of exciting programs, examples of which are the Clearwater Hudson River conservation project linked to science instruction and the Tada theater project where students write their own musical. The principal is planning to expand students' academic and cultural opportunities by further enhancing the excellent and extensive existing enrichment program.

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.

The principal provides high quality strategic leadership which is having a positive impact on maintaining high achievement. He and the assistant principal provide quality management to drive the school agenda for continuous school improvement. The new Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's review provide plans and goals which are leading to continuous improvement in curriculum opportunities and the maintenance of the high standards achieved by the school. Regular reviews of interim goals and periodic assessment data provide progress information which ensures that plans and goals are achieved and high achievement levels are maintained. Regular reviews lead to adjustments in instruction programs, goals and plans where necessary. There is a cycle of review, planning and monitoring which drives all planning and goal setting in the school. That cycle is inclusive of all members of the school community, who work as a unified group to improve curriculum, instruction, make education challenging, interesting and enjoyable and maintain the high levels of achievement in the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Anderson School (PS 334)	∅	✓	+
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