



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Cynthia Jenkins School

Public School 037

**179 - 37 137th Avenue
Queens
NY 11434**

Principal: Beverley Mitchell

Dates of review: December 5 - 6, 2006

Reviewers: Terry Brown and Martyn Groucutt

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

This elementary school provides education for 600 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. Over 90% of students are Black, 3% are Hispanic and 2% are White. Three percent are English language learners and 8% are special education students. The school is Title 1 eligible. Attendance is 90.3% which is below the average for similar schools as well as the City-wide average.

The current administration is in its second year, and has instituted a large number of changes to improve attendance, instruction and achievement.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The vision of the principal and assistant principal is the driving force for raising achievement.
- The use of external and internal data to support teaching and learning has been a priority in enabling the necessary improvements to take place.
- The whole child matters to the principal, not just their academic progress.
- A range of formal and informal data informs classroom activities and the organization of small groups within classrooms.
- The calmness and orderliness now apparent in the school support effective learning.
- Most staff work collaboratively to improve their teaching skills.
- There is flexibility of curriculum mapping and planning to respond to emerging needs of individuals over time.
- Teacher evaluation of student work leads to developmental suggestions for improvement.
- The parent co-coordinator is a very effective link between school and home.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the confidence and competence of teachers in using data to differentiate instruction and learning, particularly in supporting the progress of high-achieving students.
- Build on current efforts to involve as many parents and caregivers in their children's learning.
- Increase inter-visitation to share good instructional practice through peer observation.
- Develop the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning.
- Eliminate inconsistency in the style of feedback following formal observations by the administration.
- Increase the amount of student work on display in classrooms and include assessment linked with rubrics.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

The current administration has introduced and established a wide range of basic procedures and routines that have made the school a calm and well-ordered place. All members of the school community now feel respected and are more likely to take responsibility for their role in the students' development. The whole-school and classroom environments have been enriched and are now conducive to facilitating teaching and learning, though there is room to enhance the amount of student work that is displayed together, with clear rubrics linked with assessment.

The administration's direct, personal, professional and relaxed approach to all matters models the high expectations its members encourage in others. The sustained, deliberate and rigorous use of data has encouraged staff to use ever more appropriate instructional methods to raise student achievement, by working at the students' own level and promoting student responsibility for learning without focusing solely on external tests.

Within budgetary restrictions and limited partner availability, the school makes the most of its resources to promote the development of its students.

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 frequently collects a large range of objective and standards-based data from external and internal sources in order to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level and ethnic group as well as to check how well the school does compared with other schools and over time. Data is also used well to track the progress of English language learners, special education students and other categories of interest to the school, such as multiple holdovers. The range of information includes student notebooks and portfolios maintained by classroom teachers for English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

The administration's records are color-coded in relation to needs, such as high scoring level 2 students who could be boosted to level 3, in order to highlight individuals and to have a visual overview of the school. Frequent and regular classroom visits by the principal and assistant principal, involving discussions with students, provide additional useful information on an informal basis.

As a result of the focus on the use of data, every adult in the school with responsibility for the progress of students, and each student, has been made aware of current achievement levels. Although all staff are provided with comprehensive data, encouragement and guidance on its use, there is not complete consistency, confidence or competence in the

routine analysis of student work and performance, and this accounts in part for the continuing below average results in State tests.

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.

At the start of the academic year, the school’s goals are collaboratively developed by the school and instructional leadership teams. These goals are disseminated to all staff along with specific plans to achieve them. Analysis of student data informs specific goals and plans for individual students, groups, classrooms, grade levels, and academic subjects. Students who are in the greatest need of improvement are identified and given priority for resource allocation. While the focus is on the progress of individual students, the school is very aware of the need to be seen to move up the district ranking.

All staff are informed of the focus and implementation of plans, and are given opportunities to enhance their understanding and skills to analyze data, to raise expectations and to provide the appropriate environment for learning and instruction. Most staff implement the new curriculum initiatives and convey high expectations to their students, who are frequently consulted and informed about their performance and progress. However, displays around the school do not celebrate work well enough, nor do they consistently use rubrics to show students how their work might be improved,

While parent involvement in the school and with their children’s learning is limited, many opportunities are provided to improve this. The principal shares her vision and plans with the parents, and explains their role in improving their children’s achievement. The parents know she emphasizes hard work, including providing them with homework to help them help their children. Frequently issued flyers provide parents with information. The industrious parent coordinator acts as a mediator between parents and the school, organizes voluntary involvement, and is persistent in encouraging parents to attend workshops.

This comprehensive approach means that now most staff and students and a core of parents are fully engaged in accelerating student learning – a considerable achievement in itself.

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 mandated curriculum is thoroughly implemented with a well-structured and detailed approach using an appropriate variety of commercial programs that provide comprehensive and meaningful data to inform planning.

Teacher accountability, planning and differentiation are particularly well developed in the lower grades, particularly for encouraging accelerated progress in reading. Most teachers have progressed from whole-class teaching related to external testing towards giving

attention to each student's learning needs. However, many teachers do not differentiate instruction well enough to provide the right level of challenge, especially for high-achieving students. Computer technology is not consistently used across subject areas to engage and motivate students and increase their skills.

Budget, staff allocation and scheduling decisions are clearly informed by whole-school plans and improving individual achievement. An innovative initiative is the Experienced Corps Volunteers who provide one-to-one reading support four times a week for grades 1 and 2 students with identified weaknesses. Departmentalization of teaching at grade 6, in which specialists teach their subject to each class, has improved achievement and students report they feel more mature and prepared for their next school.

Successful procedures are in place to increase attendance. Students report that behavior in the school is much improved, instanced by fights being unusual (and now resolved by discussion) rather than daily occurrences. This makes students feel safer in the school than previously. They have considerable respect for the new administration, in particular the principal, who knows all their names and cares for the same things they do. The developments in organization and instruction ensure the students are more fully engaged in the learning process. Feedback from most teachers has now become routine and developmental. In the few instances when students feel unable to talk with their classroom teacher, they report that the guidance counselor and principal are always available and approachable.

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.

Through a process of selection, allocation of responsibilities and substantial professional development, most staff are now able to use data and their own observations to modify and focus their instruction on improving student performance.

Members of staff have access to a range of professional development opportunities. Formal observations by the administration are well received, though some staff report an inconsistency in the style of feedback depending on who carries out the observation. The principal visits classrooms and talks with students throughout each day, making informal observations and providing constructive feedback to staff. The more open and focused approach to improving teaching has increased voluntary inter-visitations, but these are not school-wide. Most staff actively participate in the collaborative professional development opportunities focusing on collection, analysis and use of data to align instruction. Those sessions led by the literacy coach for the lower grades are particularly well received.

The principal is well respected by staff, students and parents. Her presence around the school promotes calmness and order. She demonstrates obvious care for each individual and their academic and social progress, as well as how the school is perceived within its community. The equally important diligence of the assistant principal in collecting, analyzing and disseminating data is a major contribution to the improvements apparent in the school.

Recently established procedures and routines now ensure the school runs smoothly. This includes clear and appropriate delegation of authority and responsibility at all levels.

Youth development, support services and external partnerships all contribute to the pursuit of academic improvement.

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.

All members of the school community are consulted and involved in sustained discussion about the development, direction, implementation and evaluation of school initiatives, including the executive board, parent association, safety committee, staff, students and external partners. Review and revision occurs regularly at formal events and frequently and opportunistically through informal communications.

The school is flexible in its use of a wide range of information to provide immediate, agile and flexible responses to action plans at whole-school, grade and individual level. Information from daily running records through to annual external tests all contribute to an understanding of student needs. The principal and assistant principal are truly in touch with all aspects of school life. Other adults associated with the school are gradually becoming more aware of their role in improving the academic and social lives of the students and the school.

The recent establishment of appropriate procedures and routines as well as and innovative contributions, such as parents painting murals on internal walls, have resulted in improvements in attendance, suspensions, behavior and student perceptions of safety. Sustained dissemination of data and continued professional development have raised expectations and quality of teaching and have consequently improved student academic outcomes.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Cynthia Jenkins School (PS37)	∅	✓	+
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	