



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Alley Pond School

Public School 46

64- 45 218 Street

Queens

NY 11364

Principal: Marsha E Goldberg

Dates of review: November 30 - December 1, 2006

Reviewer: Kathleen Yates

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

Alley Pond School, Public School 46, is an elementary school which serves an ethnically diverse population in Queens. It caters for 424 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The greatest proportion of pupils (57%) comes from Asian families. In addition, 23% are White, 12% Hispanic and 8% are Black. Nine percent of students are English language learners. The school does not receive Title 1 funding. Alley Pond School provides barrier-free education. Attendance is above average for similar and City-wide schools, and punctuality is good.

The principal has been in the position for 5 years.

There are a number of special features to this school. Most significant is the fact that it has the highest special educational needs population in District 26, (30%). There are 5 self-contained special education classes for children with severe learning difficulties. The school also caters to many pupils who have physical difficulties, some of which are severe. This is also the only school in the district with collaborative team teaching classes in all grades.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a strong leader and is held in high regard by all staff, students and parents.
- The school cares for all the students very well: it is a school with a heart.
- The open school climate encourages students to attend school regularly, to want to do their best, to respect each other and to behave well.
- Students' achievement is high due to the high expectations of the staff.
- Data on students' performance is analyzed effectively so that teachers have a clear understanding of what it is students need to do to improve.
- Enrichment activities provide students with good opportunities to develop life skills.
- There is a close collaboration between all staff who contribute fully to decision-making as a result of regular interpretation of data.
- The school is especially effective in meeting the social, emotional and academic needs of those children with the greatest barriers to learning.
- There is a close connection with outside organizations which enriches students' lives.
- Parents are regularly consulted and are actively involved in their children's learning and all aspects of the school's work.

What the school needs to improve

- Implement the newly devised standardized school wide portfolio system fully and ensure that it is rigorously followed.
- Further improve the planning process by providing more structure to meetings so that time is used more purposefully.
- Build on the strong professional development program by formulating an agreed system for giving teachers written feedback to indicate how well they are doing and the areas which require improvement.
- Develop teachers' knowledge and understanding of technology so that they are able to make more effective use of it across all subjects throughout the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

Alley Pond School provides a good education for all its students. Clear systems and structures, maintained by the administrative team, ensure that the school is well organized, orderly, calm and purposeful.

The school provides a warm and welcoming environment to which staff, students and parents feel proud to belong. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement and staff at all levels show real pleasure in celebrating students' achievements. Students with physical, emotional and learning difficulties are very well integrated into the school. Classes are carefully organized to ensure maximum inclusion and students work and play together very happily. The school works effectively to ensure good progress and achievement for all students.

Resources are good and support the curriculum effectively. The principal is skilled in budget management and works closely with parents and the wider community for the benefit of the students. Technology facilities are shortly to be updated.

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 has effective systems for collecting a good range of data on the progress of individuals and groups of students, and to compile a picture of their achievement. This includes information from standardized tests, teacher-based assessments to check on subject-specific skills and continuous assessment during lessons. For the students who join the school at other than normal entry times, there are clear systems to evaluate their needs on arrival which ensures they too are well provided for. This data is combined with information about students' personal development, and carefully analyzed by the administration to give a detailed picture of the progress of each student. It is well used by teachers to indicate the next steps in learning.

The principal and her assistant principal carefully monitor overall performance, ensuring that the achievements of ethnic, gender, ability groups and special education students are closely analyzed. The needs of English language learners are also carefully analyzed and appropriately provided for. The school compares the progress of students in each subject, class by class and grade by grade to ensure that teaching and learning are equally effective for all students. School leaders carefully compare the school's performance against that of similar and City-wide schools. They also compare their present and past results and the relative performance of each cohort of students as they pass through the school. The analysis of this data has a positive influence on students' achievement as evidenced by test scores. In 2004 – 2005 levels of achievement exceeded those of similar

schools in English language arts, mathematics and science and the school has continued to make good progress.

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 use of a wide range of assessment information is instrumental in enabling the setting of whole-school goals and in ensuring that students make good progress. Teachers know their students well and are accurate in their grading of students’ work. This ensures that they know how to help students to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do in order to improve. Students confirm that they have a clear understanding of their teachers’ expectations.

The school supports teachers in agreeing to expectations collaboratively through conferencing and carefully structured portfolios of students’ work. Through discussions, staff support and challenge each other well in suggesting strategies for improvement. The planning process could be further improved by providing more structure to meetings so that time is used more purposefully.

Students having difficulty with their learning are quickly identified, resulting, if appropriate, in referral to the wide range of intervention support services. Members of these services work together well and share information ensuring a coordinated approach to students and their families. Parents, especially those whose children are special education students, are very appreciative of what the school does for their children. The faster learners are well provided for by the implementation of ‘Project Beyond’, a pull-out program for the gifted students where they engage in research projects to set them even higher goals.

Parents are actively involved in discussions of their children’s goals and progress towards them. As well as formal consultation evenings, the school has an open door policy so that parents are welcome to come in regularly to discuss their children’s progress with individual teachers.

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 school’s curriculum is closely aligned to the mandated curriculum, underpinned with pacing calendars to ensure that requirements are met. There is a wide range of enrichment, sports and arts programs as well as core curriculum activities to stimulate and engage all students in their learning. All teachers are involved in curriculum development as they review and evaluate the impact of their instruction.

Instruction is firmly based on high expectations of students and review of their progress. The school has accurately identified the need to implement a standardized school-wide portfolio system. A new system has been produced very recently but there has not yet

been sufficient time for this to become fully embedded into practice or to ensure that it is rigorously followed.

Teachers are held accountable for their students' achievements, through team discussions, scrutiny of students' work, assessment information, and directly in meetings with the principal. Information from assessment is well used to identify subjects that need further attention. Good use has been made of the initiative 'Essential questions' so that students are becoming skilled in answering questions confidently. Teachers plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data.

The analysis and use of data is central to decision-making in the school, including for budget, staffing and scheduling decisions. The principal uses the budget to direct resources to the wide ranging needs of all students. Careful attention is paid to using staff talents and strengths to the best advantage, for example, in the teaching of science.

Attendance is very good. It is actively pursued with a positive approach. Monthly class records of attendance are displayed so that students are aware of how their grade is doing and this motivates them to be the class with the highest attendance. Most students arrive punctually. The school takes very good care of the students and they know that the staff will support them with any issues that arise with their work or in their personal development. There are effective systems to promote good behavior, so that students are attentive, well motivated and enjoy their work. The school's focus on high expectations for all promotes a culture in which students take responsibility for their learning.

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.

There is a good balance of long-serving staff and more recently-appointed staff, for example, the assistant principal who has been appointed into a newly created post. She has already established herself well within the school and has a very firm understanding of student performance and the capacity to make further improvement. For example, she has been instrumental in the production of the portfolio system described above to accelerate the learning of each student.

The school selects staff using a range of criteria which best meets the needs of the post they are to fill. Teachers for English language learners, speech teachers, occupational and physical therapists and counselors use their expertise well to help all children to achieve the best that they can. Teaching is good and promotes learning successfully. For example, the school has been identified as a 'Mentor School for Writing'. Good teaching is maintained by the culture of high expectations, discussion, self- and peer-assessment.

The principal and the assistant principal frequently observe classroom teaching which confirms that students are being well taught. These 'walkthroughs' enable leaders to identify strengths in teaching and the curriculum and also to reinforce the analysis of data to evaluate provision and plans for improvement. However, the school does not have an agreed system for giving teachers in the classrooms written feedback so that they have a formal record which indicates how well they are doing and the areas which require improvement.

There is a good program for the professional development of all staff including paraprofessionals. It is firmly based on the continuous drive to improve student achievement and much support has been received from outside partnerships. While the school benefits from the expertise of a computer specialist, with the imminent advent of new facilities for technology, further development of all teachers' knowledge and understanding of technology is required to ensure that they are able to make the best use of this to improve instruction in all subjects across the school.

The principal manages the school effectively, and it is calm and orderly. Students behave well and are eager to learn. All constituents have confidence in the principal's capacity to lead the school through further improvement. There are effective partnerships which enhance student achievement, in particular the relationships with support services for those students who face the most barriers to their learning.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan is a working document, which provides a good framework for the school to evaluate its work through the year. All areas of the school's work are carefully planned, drawing on all available data, and kept under constant review. Regular meetings of teams across the school, coaches, academic intervention services, parents, partnership committees, student council and the school leadership team all contribute to the success the school achieves in evaluating each student's progress and adapting plans to accelerate learning.

Staff at all levels assume responsibility for assessing and analyzing students' progress and for planning, evaluating and revising interventions and initiatives according to need. Because data analysis is well established, plans have precise goals and timeframes and have been revised as new information has become available. Although the school is a successful one, there is a determination to continue to improve among the whole team.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Alley Pond School (PS 46)	∅	✓	+
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