



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Chris Galas School

Public School 047

**9 Power Road
New York
NY 11693**

Principal: Patricia Tubridy

Dates of review: May 15 - 16, 2007

Reviewer: Peter Lewis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Chris Galas School is a long established school located on the island of Broad Channel in Queens. It has 260 students from pre-kindergarten to 8th grade, the majority of whom, at 80%, are White; this is a higher proportion than is usually found in the City schools. Of the remainder, 12% are Hispanic, 5% are Black and a small proportion are Asian of other backgrounds. All of these figures are below the average for similar schools across the City. The school is not Title 1 funded. The proportion of special education and English language learner students, at just over 7%, and just over 2% respectively is also below the average across City schools and other schools of a similar nature.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a good leader who has successfully built a strong staff team who fully share her vision of high expectations.
- Senior staff are very well respected by teachers, children and parents and so are able to make a difference to the school's development.
- Very good choices have been made in the selection and development of staff at all levels.
- The school has worked hard and successfully in continuing to develop a broad and stimulating curriculum.
- Good links have begun to be established between subjects, these are having a positive impact on students' learning.
- The local environment is rich and varied and is used well to promote learning, especially in science, and students' personal development.
- Adults in the school are thoroughly committed to their students who know that they will 'go the extra mile' on their behalf.
- Students are well behaved and keen to learn.
- Relationships between adults and between adults and children are very positive and characterized by mutual respect.
- Through a wide variety of activities, parents are fully involved in the education of their children.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the level of comparison of the progress made by students and groups of students in the different subjects.
- Measure students' progress against individual targets that are set in relation to their achievement at the start of each year.
- Ensure that planned activities are clearly linked to learning outcomes in order to meet the needs of all students in all lessons.
- Ensure that all students know what they are intended to learn as well as what they are meant to do in lessons.
- Set interim markers so that the school's progress towards its goals can be monitored more precisely, and adaptations made where necessary.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Since the principal's appointment, considerable improvement has been achieved as a result of her strong focus on ensuring a consistently high quality of teaching and learning. In this, she is very well supported by the assistant principal and by other senior staff. The school has collated a good range of assessment data which has given it a clear picture of the patterns of student performance in the different classes and grades. It has made a good start in using this information to plan for improvement although, at present, this lacks sufficient detail to enable the school to track its progress sufficiently rigorously. Relationships and teamwork throughout the school are good and improving because of the level of discussion and evaluation that has been established, and because of the high expectations of students and staff that are set so clearly by the principal. Staff share the principal's vision of what can be achieved. The school has identified the need to improve student learning further through planning lessons that are targeted more effectively at students' different needs and has made a good start in establishing consistency in this work. Students are confident and articulate and very well motivated. They enjoy coming to school and collaborate well in those lessons where opportunities are planned to enable them to work together. Parents feel part of the school as a result of the high quality of information that is available, and particularly appreciate the way in which the principal and staff make themselves available should they have any concerns. They know that swift action will be taken to address any problems.

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.

The school has collated a good range of information to help it in understanding the progress made by its students. There is an effective and developing emphasis on the use of data which, increasingly, enables leaders to understand what is working well and this helps teachers to plan lessons that match the needs of their students. In all grades and classes, information about each student's performance in reading is clearly set out and is updated regularly so that interventions can be accurately planned. This information is effectively used in, for example, developing a clear picture of aspects of students' learning that are more or less successful, and in developing strategies to ensure that any comparatively weaker areas are addressed. The accurate analysis of students' performance has been used well in identifying aspects of the curriculum that require development. The principal has also used data well in developing a clear picture of students' comparative performance across subjects, particularly in English language arts and mathematics, and across grades. While the school acknowledges that inconsistencies remain in the degree to which teachers make use of available information, nonetheless, systems have been established which have begun to make a difference. The school also recognizes that there is scope to refine its analysis of the comparative performance of boys and girls.

The principal has ensured that the school has a very clear view of the achievement of English language learners and of special education students and this information is used effectively by guidance and intervention staff in planning interventions to secure improvement. Individualized education plans accurately identify the small steps that are needed to secure improvement and gains are tracked carefully through regular meetings. Comparisons of student performance are made with other schools and across subjects, particularly English language arts and mathematics. However, this level of information has yet to be used fully in understanding the relationship between, for example, students' performance in mathematics and the same students' performance in science.

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.

Considerable efforts have been made in seeking to improve the school's ability to collect an appropriate range of data and to analyze this in seeking to identify aspects of the school's work that require improvement. The principal and assistant principal work well, in collaboration with coaches and teachers, to evaluate the school's effectiveness. Plans for improvement focus on information drawn from the analysis of data and the outcome of discussion to identify areas for improvement. As a result, goals are set which identify development needs across classes and subjects and staff are fully aware of plans for development. Parents, feel included in the school's work and well informed about the progress that their children have made. A good start has been made in using student assessment information in identifying areas and goals for improvement, although the absence of clear interim 'check points' makes it difficult for the school to identify the progress that is being made toward achieving its goals.

Regular meetings are held to review student achievement focusing, particularly, on reading, writing and mathematics. These meetings clearly establish the high expectations of the school. Goals are set for overall achievement in subjects and, to a slightly lesser extent, across classes and grades. At the same time, student progress is monitored carefully through interim and teachers' assessments. Goals are monitored particularly well for students whose progress gives particular cause for concern; this enables the school to ensure that their progress remains on track. However, the lack of year end predictors that create defined targets for students across subjects makes it difficult for the school to measure their progress as effectively. Although some students have an understanding of their goals, these are neither consistent nor sufficiently specific. The school has worked hard to increase teachers' use of assessment information in planning for differentiated instruction, but acknowledges that inconsistencies remain. This is particularly important in relation to the school's ability to meet the needs of higher achieving students who frequently work on the same tasks as their peers.

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's curriculum is broad, stimulating and successful in promoting student interest and involvement in their learning. It fulfils all statutory requirements and is enhanced by

the increasingly good use that is made of the local environment. Links across subjects have been developed, particularly through the promotion of the visual and performing arts, which are clearly seen, for example, in the vibrant display of students' work. The school's budget has been well used in this process, through, for instance, the acquisition of resources to improve the teaching of reading. At the same time, work to enhance teachers' understanding of the need to plan work according to the different needs and learning styles of students has achieved considerable success, although the school recognizes that inconsistencies remain. For example, while students comment on the degree to which teachers plan lessons that are enjoyable, they also identify instances in which they feel that more could be expected of them. Scheduling decisions and the deployment of teaching and support staff, and volunteers are made in response to the needs revealed by student assessment information. These decisions have a very positive impact on student learning, particularly those of lower achievement. As a result of these features, and the degree to which data increasingly informs planning meetings, teachers' accountability across the school is becoming more clearly understood. Staff assignments and the schedule for instruction are considered in the light of what will be most helpful to the students.

The school has well-understood and successful systems for ensuring and promoting student attendance. Relationships between students and teachers are exceptionally positive and are very well modeled by the principal and many other staff. This results in the very positive attitude that students have to their learning. They know that teachers and other adults care for them, and describe the degree to which problems are readily resolved.

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.

Since her appointment, the principal has successfully built a school that is very much part of its community. Her very high expectations of staff and students are clearly communicated across the school, and seen also in the way in which staff are selected and developed. Staff share these high expectations, although there remain inconsistencies in the degree to which they are translated into teachers' planning. Considerable emphasis has been placed on planning professional development that reflects planned improvements. The principal has been well supported in this work by the assistant principal. Through their work together they have successfully established a strong culture of evaluation within the school in which the commitment to secure continued improvement is shared, this has resulted in positive changes over time. Senior leaders have a very good understanding of the quality of instruction throughout the school which, together with improvements in the analysis of student data, has been used well in identifying areas which require improvement and in planning appropriate support. Staff work well together, which enables them to improve their practice and to share ideas through observations and a good range of opportunities that have been established for them to discuss their work. The school has been successful in developing staff confidence so that developments have had a positive impact on student learning. In no small measure, this is because of the very high regard in which the principal and assistant principal are held by staff, students and parents.

The school's use of student assessment data has developed well. Staff track students' progress and increasingly demonstrate a good understanding of the progress made in

student attainment. Staff acknowledge the clear systems that have been put in place so that the school runs smoothly. Very good use is made of community organizations in extending the school's ability to provide for the full range of students' needs.

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.

The school's planning for student improvement is comprehensive and derived from a wide range of data from tests, other assessments and both formal and informal evaluations of teachers' and students' work. While this level of planning enables the school to identify whether or not it has been successful in meeting its goals, the lack of interim criteria mean that this analysis tends to be retrospective. As a result, the school cannot always be certain of the rate of progress that it is making towards meeting its objectives. Although there is good evidence that plans, for example those that have to do with the progress made by lower achieving and special education students, are modified in response to improvements revealed by student assessments, this approach is less well used to review the progress made by students of other levels of achievement.

The principal is well supported by other senior staff in beginning to analyze the data more closely and, as a result, in improving the school's ability to set targets that relate to individual students' potential. The Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) is broadly accurate in its identification of development needs and, to a lesser extent, of plans designed to address these. While the school uses data accurately in identifying aspects of its work for inclusion within the CEP, the features that characterize the resulting goals are too general to enable progress towards their achievement to be tracked closely. In these plans, too, the lack of clear timescales by which completion will be achieved, hampers the school in tracking the rate of improvement in order to modify plans at an early enough point.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Chris Galas School (PS 047)	∅	✓	+
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	