



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Jackson Heights School

Public School 069

**77-02 37 Avenue
Jackson Heights
NY 11372**

Principal: Martha Vazquez

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Reviewer: Nan Billingham

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Jackson Heights School is a large multicultural elementary school with 1133 students enrolled from kindergarten through grade 5. It is popular and oversubscribed. The school's population is made up of 43.94% Hispanic, 41.37% Asian and other, 1.5% Black and 13.17% White students. Up to 41 different languages are represented in the school. Of the school population, approximately 30% are English language learners and 9% are special education students. Sixty-nine percent of the school's population is eligible for Title 1 funding. This is comparable with similar schools and slightly lower than City schools. Attendance is good, exceeding City averages and this year's figures are consistent with previous years' 95.1% rate.

The school is a Magnet School for the Cultural and Performing Arts and is in the second year of implementing the school-wide enrichment model program.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school-wide enrichment model program supports the development of culture and art and provides excellent opportunities for all students to develop new skills, boosts self confidence and prepares them for 'the Challenges of Tomorrow'.
- Support for students in need or at risk is very good and the number of referrals to special education services continues to decrease.
- There is increased involvement of parents through the highly active parent association and its work with the school in successfully delivering a wide range of workshops.
- Professional development programs for all staff are priority and are viewed as key to continuous improvement.
- Teacher commitment, planning and collaboration are a strength of the school..
- The school uses data well to inform planning and professional development needs.
- The curriculum is aligned well to meets the needs of all its students.
- Successes and achievements are widely celebrated.
- Students attend regularly, are happy, pleasant, friendly and polite and have pride in their school.
- The principal is respected by the whole school community as a leader with a clear vision for the school and its students.

What the school needs to improve

- Find ways to present whole school data in a more accessible format for staff, to support the effective monitoring of subgroups
- Review the use of data to inform instruction and measure outcomes.
- Continue to develop the use of differentiated activities more fully to support all students' learning in the classroom.
- Provide more inquiry and project-based opportunities for students to learn more independently.
- Build on the good practice in the use of technology by teachers and students to support further learning in the classroom.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

“Learning today for the challenges of tomorrow” is the school’s motto. The principal’s vision is reflected through the whole school focus on ensuring all students receive high quality literacy and mathematics instruction and other learning opportunities to support this. The principal has committed resources to the professional development of all her staff in these areas to ensure these core skills are replicated through the other curriculum and enrichment areas. This is impacting positively on student achievement in English language arts and mathematics.

The school is recognized for its innovative approach to cluster and arts academy and the magnet and enrichment model. This approach provides excellent opportunities and experiences that students very much enjoy and ensure that they are prepared as young citizens to move onto the next stage of their education.

Communications between staff is excellent and they collaborate effectively to provide a safe, caring and structured learning environment for their students. The active parents’ association works well with the school to encourage and increase parental involvement. This impacts on student attendance levels and high attendance levels at parent workshops. In particular, the parents articulated their support for the development of multi-cultural understanding and appreciation.

State data and school formative data is reviewed regularly to provide administrators and teachers with a clear picture of progress of students in each grade and class. The school has identified three main areas for continued development and improvement and strategies are emerging to ensure progress. These areas are the continued development and integration of technology; using data more sophisticatedly to drive instruction and the expansion of the enrichment model.

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 collects formative and summative data to monitor students’ classroom and grade level performance and progress on a frequent basis. It uses a range of data including Princeton test scores along with its own reading and mathematic scores four times a year as its main monitoring and review process. Trends in performance are noted and it compares itself with other local schools.

Each September all students’ reading levels are tested to establish a baseline assessment. The Princeton review scores are used to build up a picture during the year of each student and each grade along with mathematic unit scores and reading and writing data. The school is currently reviewing its methods of collecting data for reading levels to support better review and evaluation for students, teachers and parents.

The school is focused on ensuring that those students in greatest need of improvement and special education students are monitored closely. Although the principal does not disaggregate scores for all sub groups, she does monitor closely the literacy development

across subjects of all students with a focus on grades 3, 4 and 5. Also due to changes in demographic trends within the district she is aware of the impact on the school population and that English language learner students have increasing needs.

Comparisons with other schools in the district are at present informal but this is developing as the school moves forward. The administration recognizes the need to develop the use of a school wide assessment system that is easy to access and understand, and gives accurate data at a variety of levels and across all subject areas. The school also recognizes the need for the increased use of technology to collect and analyze the large amounts of data generated and gathered in order to support teachers in tracking students' progress more efficiently.

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.

High expectations are conveyed to parents and students. Parents commented on how well supported they feel and the very good communication systems the school has put in place which supports their understanding of the school's development and their own children's progress and performance.

Targets in the Comprehensive Education Plan are clear and have a good level of challenge. Literacy development is a key goal in building students' success, and is shared with all stakeholders. Structures are in place to involve all teachers in supporting literacy development across all subjects; these include common planning periods, professional activity periods and grade team meetings. The two assistant principals are responsible for the supervision of the upper and lower grades. They meet frequently with the principal and their ongoing discussions and observation schedules, including walkthroughs and formal and informal classroom observations, all of which contribute to supporting staff in planning instruction to meet school and student goals.

English language learners and special education students are well looked after. The principal has increased the number of collaborative team teaching classes and is now realigning them to ensure progress through grades 3 to 5. The numbers of special education students are increasing because of the changing population and also because the school supports and integrates a number of physically impaired students from another district. The pupil personnel team meets regularly to discuss, track and make informed decisions to support individual students' needs. Notes, actions and timeframes are clear and membership of the group ensures effective intervention and support for a wide range of needs.

Collaboration is key feature of the school and this ensures that the planning and the setting of objectively measured goals are constantly monitored and reviewed using the formative data generated by the school. The principal has created a calendar and schedule of meetings to further support this.

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 Teachers College writing and reading project and the Every Day mathematics program generate interim data which underpins all the school does in supporting the delivery of the mandated curriculum. Administrators, coaches, faculty leaders and teachers are accountable for improving student outcomes and are constantly reviewing and revising plans to address students’ needs. Structures are in place to enable teachers to plan collaboratively and to support professional development thus ensuring consistency of delivery across grade levels. Differentiated support is available for students with identified needs but there is insufficient emphasis on differentiated activities for all students.

Staffing is very stable and cluster teachers have been appointed to ensure expertise across a wide range of subjects including music. The principal consults with her staff when making recruitment decisions including the appointment of cluster teachers and subjects. Budgeting decisions support changes in role and promotions and are also focused on providing extra support for English language learning students.

Instructional programs are well structured, resourced and relevant. Students in a grade 5 classroom were involved in ‘We the People’ part of a citizenship program and were actively participating in research, debate and decision making. The development and increased use of more inquiry and project based work is an area of development rightly identified by the school.

Students are well cared for, they feel safe and enjoy all aspects of their school. In particular they commented on how much they appreciate the scheduled enrichment cluster activities. These opportunities allow all students to learn and achieve through hands on practical activities ranging from ‘Young Journalists’ to ‘Young Impressionists’. Students also have opportunities to participate in a wide range of events such as fund raising, the school newsletter to parents and field trips.

Attendance is high because unexplained absence is followed up and students enjoy coming to school. This was evidenced throughout the school by student attitudes and displays of student work.

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.

The school is well led by the principal who has a clear vision for the school, which is shared with her staff. The school has established clear procedures for the hiring of staff and expects those appointed to have a good grasp of planning and assessment. Over the past four years, with her assistant principals, she has successfully raised student achievement by focusing on improving literacy.

Professional development is strength of the school. It is carefully planned to meet the needs of the school, the grade or individual teachers’ needs and makes good use of data to do so. A needs survey is carried out annually. The management of professional development is highly effective and the commitment of all teachers to it is exemplary. The principal has created a schedule which ensures all teachers receive the Teacher College literacy training to support consistency across all classes and curriculum instructional areas. Cluster teachers are all experts in their subject areas and they turnkey training

effectively. The cabinet monitors this process carefully. The school is entering the third year of the school-wide enrichment model program and specific training opportunities to support the development of this program are available during each summer recess. These places are highly sought after by all teachers.

Classroom observations are an integral part of the school's monitoring regime. Administrators observe lessons formally, informally and by walkthroughs. All observations are documented and followed up with feedback. These observations drive instruction and professional development decisions. Teachers appreciate opportunities to visit each other's lessons and those in other schools. Newly qualified teachers and those new to the school or grade level have mentor support to ensure consistency of instruction. Grade level team meetings, faculty conferences and working with coaches all provide teachers with the opportunity to reflect upon current practice and to review professional development needs.

The school runs smoothly, and students, teachers and parents all commented on the clear procedures and the excellent communications systems. Parents also articulated clearly their satisfaction with the multi-cultural nature of the school and the opportunities to celebrate its diversity.

Further incorporation of community based organizations is an area of growth identified by the school. The school works with other institutions including Queens College to support the development of student teachers and this is viewed as a reciprocal process. Residencies include working with Carnegie Hall and the social studies teachers and students have worked with the City Hall Academy. These, along with many others projects, are viewed as key to supporting the school's aim to provide the students with a balanced education that includes exposure to the arts, music and other enrichment opportunities.

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 monitoring and evaluation processes are evolving. The Comprehensive Education Plan is a 'living document', which includes measurable outcomes. These are periodically monitored and tracked by the different school groups with responsibility for each of the different goals. These groups assess and evaluate progress towards the goals and make any changes necessary to meet the learning needs of the students. For example, the technology plan identified that professional development was made available to all staff. The technology teacher delivered this professional development training last summer but continues to monitor progress over time, providing support and assistance at varying levels. The principal and her assistant principals through their classroom observations and analyses of data identify areas of need. Staff and key personnel are diligent and committed to ensuring goals are met.

Student progress is compared across classes, grades and the school four times a year. Inter-visitations, adjustments to the professional development program and intervention strategies are implemented where outcomes are not demonstrating effective progress. However, the focus is on students identified as at risk, special education students and English language learners. Insufficient attention is paid to students working at the higher levels and other subgroups.

The school plans for next year have been clearly identified by reviewing previous plans and analyzing available data. All staff have opportunities to be involved and contribute in

the debates and discussion around these. Members of teaching staff are invited to meetings of the instructional cabinet which is a key group for moving the school forward.

The school acknowledges that it needs to make the data more accessible for all staff to support developing instruction to meet the goals and targets set and ultimately more participation, ownership and accountability for all staff members of the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Jackson Heights School (PS 69)	∅	✓	+
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	