



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Richard Arkwright School

Public School 091

**68-10 Central Avenue
Queens
NY 11385**

Principal: Kenneth A Lombardi

Dates of review: May 7- 9, 2007

Reviewer: William Haft

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Richard Arkwright School is an elementary school with 814 students enrolled in grades kindergarten through 5. The student population is comprised of 50% White students, 41% Hispanic, 3% Black and 5% Asian or students from other ethnic backgrounds. Nine percent of students are English language learners and 22% are special education students. Students who are new arrivals to the country come primarily from countries of Eastern Europe, including Albania, Poland and Romania. The school does not qualify for Title 1 funding. The attendance rate, at 92.1%, is below the average for similar and City schools.

At 22%, the special education population represents a substantially higher percentage of the population than the City average. The school has developed a program of collaborative team teaching (CTT) that enables 60% of special education students to be educated with their peers.

The administration at PS 91 has been remarkably stable. The principal is in his 16th year at the school, and both assistant principals have served there in supervisory capacities for eight years. The school's general educational program has been characterized by a commitment to the comprehensive implementation of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. The school recently completed a new wing and added a dedicated computer lab.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is respected as an instructional leader who is accessible and open has the capacity to effect change.
- Staff members know and respect students, and respond to their academic and personal needs.
- The school runs smoothly as a result of consistent expectations for classroom structure and instructional process that align with the school's educational priorities.
- The school has implemented its literacy program in a coherent and comprehensive fashion.
- The school targets substantial time and resources to accelerate the progress and raise the performance of those students in greatest need of improvement.
- The school has established a professional culture, including frequent observation by peers and supervisors as well as collaborative analysis of student performance,
- Professional development opportunities, including partnerships with outside bodies, reflect and align well with the school's educational priorities.
- The school's partnership with Catholic Charities provides on-site student counseling and support that might not otherwise be available.

What the school needs to improve

- Use available data to measure the performance and progress of groups of students across the school including important subgroups within the school.
- Instigate collaborative goal setting with measurable targets derived from data in order to evaluate progress at individual, class, grade and whole school level.
- Structure the extended day program to provide teachers and students with a more meaningful opportunity for supplemental and differentiated instruction.
- Make improving attendance a higher priority.
- Evaluate student progress in relation to specific goals and performance targets in order to realign practices and reassign resources.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The Richard Arkwright School reflects many strengths of a neighborhood school. The environment is safe, orderly and nurturing. Parents, teachers and students appreciate the work of the administrators. The teachers know their students, both personally and educationally. Staff enjoy coming to work and the students want to learn. Several years ago, the principal engaged fully in external professional development associated with the newly mandated English language arts curriculum. The school's commitment to aligning professional development with the English language arts program and to transmitting knowledge to all staff members has facilitated the consistent and coherent implementation of that program. Good partnerships have been established to further the students' academic and personal development.

Despite the school's strengths, it has work to do in terms of establishing performance-related goals and using relevant comparisons to check the progress of its plans on an ongoing basis. In addition, the school lacks objective standards by which to assess whether its strategies for educating students are effective. Those gaps have a particular impact on the school's ability to evaluate and improve the achievement of key groups like its growing special education population for which the school did not meet its adequate yearly progress target in English language arts last year.

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 gathers objective, standards-based data regarding student performance and monitors individual student's progress well. In English language arts, in particular, the school is exemplary in gathering data related to student performance. Following the Teachers College program, the school maintains careful "running records" of student reading and writing in relation to grade-level expectations, including reading levels and skills mastered or not yet learned. The records provide rich information to identify teaching points for future learning. As a result, the school has what is needed to understand student performance and progress by individual, classroom, grade level and relevant group such as special education students. Mathematics teachers use similarly appropriate assessment systems and structures for comparing performance, although their implementation is less comprehensive than for English language arts. The school concentrates on those subgroups of particular interest and, in addition to collecting data at classes and grade level, focuses predominantly on special education students and English language learners. The school has given far less thought to data relating to different ethnic groups or boys and girls.

Although the school gathers individual student performance data effectively, it does not use that data to make relevant comparisons about the progress of groups of students. The absence of such information is particularly notable for groups like special education

students who represent a rapidly growing population at the school and are the subject of targeted intervention through use of collaborative teaching teams. Apart from State assessments, the school does not have data from which to make relevant performance comparisons to past performance or progress of such students.

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.

The school’s commitment to students in greatest need of improvement is well developed. The school targets high needs students effectively through its pupil performance team (PPT) and a blend of special education strategies. In PPT meetings, the primary teacher presents the case and status for students identified as needing additional support. The team conducts a thorough review of performance data and generates focused, performance-based recommendations and strategies that are likely to improve the student achievement. Interventions are realigned in response to data at regular intervals.

Despite having plans for individual learning based on current data, the school does not set goals for performance for individual students. As a result, the school lacks either objectively measurable targets for immediate and long-range improvement or plans and timeframes for reaching those targets. The school generally evaluates progress in relation to grade-level measures but has not articulated specific goals related to those measures. The absence of defined goals is most noteworthy for relevant categories of English language arts and mathematics students such as at classroom and grade level and for special education students, for which the school clearly is gathering adequate data.

The absence of precise goals does not prevent the school from conveying appropriately high expectations to students and their families. In class, student-teacher conferencing is a regular part of the educational process that gives students a good opportunity to share information about their performance. Teachers are easily accessible to parents, and scheduled conferences several times each year provide a formal opportunity to discuss progress and exchange student performance information. In turn, students and families partner with teachers to show a solid commitment to implementing the school’s plans for improvement.

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 has selected curricula that align closely with State standards and generate meaningful performance data. Instructional programs engage students with common routines and procedures like “flow of the day” charts and learning opportunities that typically range across individual, small group or whole class in the course of a lesson. Students are engaged and generally on task. The curricula for mathematics and literacy have the capacity to generate meaningful interim data, and the system of colored folders for data collection is adequate. Running records and team planning meetings facilitate differentiation of instruction based on needs revealed by the data in relation to the school’s

plans for student learning. Staff know and respect students. Parents and students report that teachers know and are responsive to students' personal as well as academic needs. The safety and security of the school environment has a clear impact on student learning.

Budget and scheduling decisions generally reflect the school's educational priorities. Recent significant budget decisions include adding twenty new teachers to reduce class sizes for more effective implementation of core academic programs. The school has restructured the schedule to establish common planning time by grade and subject, leading to more effective alignment of instruction with school wide plans. The principal has correctly identified the need to revise the extended day program to provide a more meaningful, realistic opportunity to address students' remedial needs. He makes staff hiring and assignment decisions that foster effective implementation of plans for improvement. For example, he prioritized the creation of effective collaborative team teaching pairings to improve outcomes for the growing special education population.

The school has identified attendance as an area for improvement. Staff intervene in response to high rates or significant patterns of absences. However, the practices have not been consistently effective and attendance rates have declined by one percentage point to fall below the City average.

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 runs smoothly as a result of having consistent expectations for classroom structure and instructional processes that align with the school's educational priorities. Procedures are clearly understood and generally followed. Teachers and parents view the principal's leadership as open, accessible and responsive, enabling him to effect changes like consistent, comprehensive implementation of the literacy program.

Professional development decisions focus on improving student outcomes, particularly in English language arts and mathematics. Participation in Teachers College professional development fosters effective implementation of the literacy program including improving teachers' capacity to generate and analyze relevant student performance data. Participation in the program has been exemplary and the school has established a flexible, successful turn-key system for regular dissemination of information. Teachers and supervisors evaluate the effectiveness of specific professional development activities through self-evaluation, observation and the review of student performance.

External professional development is amplified by an experienced literacy specialist who leads strategy development, coaches individual teachers, demonstrates techniques, and helps teachers modify lesson structure to suit particular content. The principal and other administrators regularly observe classroom teaching. Teachers are accustomed to feedback from administrators following both formal and frequent informal visits and are encouraged to observe and draw strategies from their peers. Grade level teams plan effectively by unit, and teachers candidly discuss strengths and weaknesses of their instructional approaches.

Administrators and staff are selected based on high expectations for student performance and demonstrated ability to effectively implement the educational programs. Instructional planning takes place in teams. Leaders regularly solicit input from teachers regarding

development and revision of instructional plans based on results in the classroom. For example, the principal is evaluating revisions to the Teachers College program for English language arts in the early grades to improve its effectiveness based on staff analysis and discussion. Similarly, the principal correctly recognizes the need to improve professional development to increase instructional capacity in special education in response to the rapidly growing special education population.

The school has a number of useful partnerships, including a Catholic charities partnership that provides essential on-site student support and counseling that might not otherwise be available.

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 undeveloped.

Although the school conducts frequent informal and qualitative assessments of progress, it has not developed interim goals by which to measure the effectiveness of educational plans at regular intervals. The school tracks individual student progress, but it does not make comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools in order to measure the effectiveness of its educational plans.

Where student progress differs by groups, revisions to instructional strategies and plans tends to be inconsistent. For example, the school's leadership recognizes that grade 3 has significantly outperformed grades 4 and 5 on State tests in English language arts, yet the school has not revised instructional plans or goals based on those differences. On the other hand, teachers in the early grades have recognized that some instructional strategies of the literacy program are proving less effective with their students and are currently weighing specific modifications to make the program more effective. Similarly, the school has recognized and addressed the need to introduce test-like experiences gradually in the early grades to better prepare third graders for their first formal testing experience.

The school's monitoring and revision of student progress is hindered by the absence of explicit goal-setting practices, either initially or for successive phases. Monitoring and revision tends to be based on informal assessment by faculty and the administration, rather than through formal evaluation in relation to clearly defined success criteria. As a result, the school is prevented from evaluating clearly the effectiveness of its procedures and the realignment of practices and resources is less prompt and precise than it might otherwise be.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Richard Arkwright School (PS 091)	∅	✓	+
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		