



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Kew Gardens School

Public School 99

**82-37 Kew Gardens Road
Queens
NY 11415**

Principal: Paulette Foglio

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Reviewer: Candido DeJesus

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 99 is an elementary school with 750 students. Hispanic students make up about 37% of the school population, White 24%, Asian and others approximately 30% and Black 9%. The ethnic background of families is mixed but rate of recent immigration from countries such as Israel, Pakistan and Colombia is about 5% higher than City schools. Just under 20% of the students are classified as English language learners. Special education students account for about 10% of the school population. The percentage of students who are Title 1 eligible is about 12% lower than City schools in general, and the school receives Title 1 funding. Student attendance is higher than similar and other City schools.

The school is housed in two buildings within two city blocks of each other. The Annex houses the early childhood program with grades kindergarten, 1 and 2. The main building houses grades 3 through 6. The staff of Public School 99 is fairly stable and well qualified.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school maintains a flexible schedule with many opportunities for instructional and support staff to engage in work teams for planning, reflecting, and revising.
- This organization is characterized by strong academic programs, excellent extracurricular activities, strong parents' association, and good community support.
- Staff members regularly meet on their own time after work, during lunch, and on weekends to continue their planning and revising of instructional approaches.
- The school uses an effective student-centered approach towards screening new students, placement with the best teacher, and regular monitoring of progress.
- An innovative enrichment program allows students with academic needs to receive daily intervention services while academically proficient or advanced students receive instruction in the arts.
- There are procedures in place to monitor the academic and social development of all students to assure that, in the words of the principal, "No child is overlooked!"
- English language learners and special education make good progress because of the effective support they receive.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the good use and monitoring of student work portfolios in English language arts to other areas of the curriculum.
- Collect progress data from the after-school program and compare it to that from other interventions to ascertain its effectiveness.
- Update current technology and ensure its use across the curriculum to build skills and further motivate students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal has been at the helm for approximately five years. Each child enrolled at Public School 99 is carefully screened to assure the most appropriate placement with teachers, instructional groups, and fellow students. The principal is emphatic about the need to address the strengths and weaknesses of each child. She prides herself on her approach and states that, "Every new admit goes through me!"

The school uses data to instructionally and socially support every child in need of intervention and to provide a challenging and enriching program for students who demonstrate proficiency or who may be gifted and talented. The environment of the school is very welcoming and positive. Staff members enjoy working together collaboratively and often spend time meeting on weekends and after school. Students relate that they feel safe, that there are high expectations for them to achieve, and that teachers make an effort to make learning fun. Teachers are expected to be flexible and creative in how students' needs are met through instructional strategies.

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 collects data in a variety of ways on pupil performance and progress. There are records that show a detailed picture for each student that is used to indicate the next steps in learning. Teachers are able to demonstrate that they assess their students using a range of measures: standardized test scores, unit assessments, item analysis, Princeton Review, computerized testing programs (for example Edutest), and teachers' assessments. Interim assessments in reading and mathematics occur at least three times a year. These benchmark assessments are used to clearly report to the parents or caregivers the progress their child is making at parent teacher conferences. Teachers also generate their own data. The school is proficient in its use of student portfolios for writing and mathematics, and is now working to extend the use of student portfolios in other subject areas. Staff update these data as well as information about students' personal and social development on a regular basis.

Members of staff keep binders and folders that show how they monitor the data on a consistent basis throughout the school year. School programs may be revised at any time when deemed appropriate for improvement of services. Binders kept in the principal's office show the breakdown of data for the overall school population, each grade, each class and each student. The information is further broken by gender, ethnicity and special needs, as well as by examination of gains within scale scores of classroom groupings and individual students.

The principal shares the information with teachers individually, at faculty conferences and at grade conferences. The effective pupil personnel committee of some twenty-two staff

members meets regularly to review students' academic and social progress. When any student is noted to be struggling, different or additional interventions may be put in place.

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 principal has a formalized goal-setting meeting with each teacher at the beginning of the school year. There is also an end of year meeting where they discuss success and areas for improvement. As a result of these practices teachers are aware of the capabilities of each of their students and know which areas of instruction they need to address. The school has implemented a new program that assesses strands of skills tested on the City and State yearly examinations. Intensive practice is provided for all tested students for approximately three weeks leading up to the actual standardized examinations. This strategy has demonstrated growth in student achievement, since specific areas of concern are targeted.

Every classroom demonstrates the use of posted charts, word walls classroom libraries, learning centers, and reading charts. Students' work is posted on walls and bulletin boards. Bulletin boards outside of classrooms show evidence of addressing the task, the rubric used to guide quality, the standards adhered to, and comments on post-its for the students. This helps students to take responsibility for improving their work.

Appropriate attention is paid to addressing the needs of those students needing the most help. The pupil personnel team consists of administrators, teachers, service providers, and community partners, who work together well to customize services by reviewing academic, social, and developmental progress and then making changes to accelerate each student's learning. There is an effective after-school intervention program but that data needs to be better integrated in the overall school approach to data. Special education students and English language learners are very well supported, and as a result their achievement is higher than that commonly found in similar schools.

Parents and caregivers are an important part of the planning and goal-setting of this school. The school constantly communicates with parents in person and on the phone, and invites them in to discuss their children's progress. Many training events are planned to encourage them to work with their children at home and to monitor performance and progress. For example, the new computer program, Edutest, is used by teachers to create individual assessment test on specific topics or skills which students can work on in school or at home. Parents are sent published information and are given workshops at school on how to use Edutest at home.

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.

There is evidence of standardization in curriculum, planning, strategy and development across all grades, but wide latitude is permitted when differentiating instruction as long as

students achieve at high levels. Most lesson plans written by teachers reflect some differentiated instruction. This is a proficient area that is becoming well developed as teachers gain practice and experience. The standardized curriculum is modified with lots of enrichment activities in order to actively engaged students with exciting and challenging work. Small group instruction occurs in most subject areas, in which teachers work on particular skills and conference with individual students on their needs. There is also a very strong arts program evident throughout the school organization. Student-centered instruction is the priority. As a result students in every grade respond well to expectations that students can readily articulate what they are doing and why they are doing it. Computer technology is somewhat out-dated, and is not well used across the curriculum to motivate students and build their skills.

The principal maintains class charts of data for comparison of student outcomes. In consultation with her assistant principals and selected staff members, she confers and analyzes the data looking for discrepancies in progress and achievement. Teachers are held accountable for their students' progress through formal discussions about individual students.

Students are encouraged to seek out staff members with whom they have built relationships to ask for extra assistance or help in any area. They appear genuinely happy and often express that they are having fun learning. Goals for good behavior are made public and constantly discussed. Students are constantly being commended for kind acts and good manners. The school is viewed as a safe environment by students and parents. The entire school community is invested in the philosophy 'zero tolerance' for violence.

Flexible scheduling and the creative use of budgets and substitutes facilitate time for staff to monitor student progress throughout the school year. Decisions are made collaboratively as to how resources will be allocated to meet stated goals and how the budget can be modified to fund new interventions and activities, in line with the priorities in the Comprehensive Education Plan.

Public School 99 has a pupil attendance rate of approximately 94%, higher than the City and similar schools. Any pattern of long-term absences is immediately noted. A rigorous procedure results in above average attendance. Teachers provide a list of the phone numbers of the other students in each class so that a child can reach out to obtain missed homework or any other information after an absence.

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 principal is very exacting in how she selects teachers to fill vacancies in her school. She makes extra efforts to reach out to outstanding candidates for teaching jobs in the school. She is even willing to wait until she feels she can hire teachers that best fit the needs of the school. Candidates who pass the initial interview are then interviewed by the assistant principals and a representative committee of teachers. Preferred candidates must demonstrate dedication to students, strong academic skills, and a commitment to 'teaming.' As a result of this rigorous process, staff members model themselves as learners, embrace sound professional development and are willing to give extra time.

The concept of 'teaming', where work teams are created in order to discuss, reflect, review, and retool, is the school's strongest asset. Teams of teachers meet during common preps, after school, during lunch and on weekends. The administration facilitates this process by maintaining a flexible approach to the daily schedule and using F-status teachers and substitutes to free up blocks of time for teachers to meet. Teachers express satisfaction that they are planning units and using instructional strategies that are not only efficient but that are used systematically throughout the school.

Professional development includes the literacy and mathematics coaches leading workshops, visiting every classroom, and modeling successful instructional strategies. Teachers are encouraged to engage in inter-class visitations, and are empowered to select topics for professional training according to their own needs. Out-of-building attendance to specific professional development is also encouraged and those attending outside training turnkey the training strategies with other work teams. Scheduling is kept flexible in order to facilitate these professional development activities. Teachers appreciate that they are given time and encouraged to practice and improve their craft. Staff morale is high since teachers feel that the administration values teacher training.

The principal and two assistant principals visit classes on a daily basis. Formal lesson observations are done as mandated, but much time is dedicated by the administration to doing informal visits and spot checks. Special attention is allotted to new teachers in the form of new teacher workshops, assigning of mentors and observation of master teachers. Teachers are grouped with their own students when ever possible for academic intervention services.

The principal maintains a strong presence in both buildings. She is well respected by staff, students and parents, and clearly communicates her high expectations. The school is well organized, and there is effective coordination between the two sites. Instructional practices, school events, etc. are seamlessly coordinated between the two facilities.

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 school has a comprehensive approach to planning that encompasses setting goals for the entire school, for each grade, for each class, and for each student. Planning begins at the end of the school year as standardized City and State results become available. The planning process gets into high gear as the staff disaggregate new student data, evaluate where the school organization has been effective and identify where improvement is needed. The work then centers on the writing of the Comprehensive School Plan to take effect in the upcoming school year. End of year planning also encompasses reflection on the effectiveness of instruction and interventions that are currently in place.

The principal holds a monthly 'summit meeting' at which every constituency brings items to discuss especially around achievement and meeting goals. The school is flexible when new data shows that change is necessary. For example, changes are made in curriculum, and pacing calendars in each curriculum area are redesigned as necessary.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Kew Gardens School (PS99)	∅	✓	+
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