



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Belle Harbor School
Public School 114**

**400 Beach 135 Street
Queens
NY 1169**

Principal: Stephen P Grill

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Reviewer: Alan Geller

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 Belle Harbor School, located in the Belle Harbor section of Queens, is a pre-kindergarten to grade 8 school with 799 students. The school population is comprised of 90% White, 5% Hispanic, 3% Black, and 2% other ethnic groups. The school is not eligible for Title I status having only 6% eligible students. There are 5% of special education students who receive services in self-contained as well as collaborative team teaching classes. The school is successful in moving students from special education to general education classes. There are 3% English language learners who receive a pull-out mode of instruction. Attendance is steady and over 94%, which is slightly below similar schools but higher than City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is well respected by staff, students, and parents and he demonstrates the capacity to manage change well.
- The school runs smoothly as a result of the well developed routines and procedures.
- The school collects a variety of useful data to track student progress.
- A spirit of collaboration exists at team meetings and within the principal's cabinet.
- Parents are valued members of the school community as they support the school mission and participate in decision making activities.
- The staff set high expectations for the students and this can be seen in the celebrations of good student work exhibited throughout the building.
- Students enjoy participating in school activities which is reflected in the good level of attendance.
- The students feel well respected by their teachers and are actively engaged in the instructional programs.
- Budgeting decisions are based upon the academic needs of the students which correlate well to the staffing provision and scheduling plans.
- The school has an excellent tone which is created by the positive learning environment, where children feel safe and enjoy learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop teachers' skills in using data, in order to consistently track performance of individuals and groups of students.
- Further develop opportunities for teachers to observe each other and participate in self-evaluation and peer-evaluation activities.
- Continue to develop and identify intervention programs to support students in greatest need of improvement.
- Further develop a partnership with a youth development group to provide additional academic support activities.
- Systematize in the way the school monitors and assesses the effectiveness of school plans and interventions.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Since the principal arrived two years ago the school has undergone considerable change. The school has established an excellent tone with the students who are engaged by the interesting and enjoyable programs. The Core Knowledge program has recently been implemented and has an interdisciplinary approach which has created a greater interest in learning amongst the students. The teachers work collaboratively to plan the program and this has created a spirit of cooperation within the school. The teachers have high expectations for their students and everyone is committed to helping each child to achieve.

The principal is well respected by the staff, students, and parents and has introduced a yearly plan to institute positive change. The teachers are being trained in the Schools Attuned Program where they are learning to maximize student strengths to ensure that students achieve even higher levels of success. This program supports and promotes the mutual respect that exists between students and the staff, and fosters the school's positive learning environment. The workshop model is utilized in every classroom providing teachers with the opportunity to work more closely with individual students. The teachers are involved in tracking progress in reading, writing and mathematics, but this process is not developed consistently enough yet to promote the consistent mastery of skills by students. The parents are very pleased about the open lines of communication with the staff and the interesting school programs. They also participate in decision making with the school leadership team.

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 now collects data in reading, writing and mathematics which provides a general picture of how well individual and classes of students achieve, but this work is not done consistently across the school. The school leaders have made a good start in using the internal assessments and standardized test results to compare the performance of students, classes and grades, but have not yet analyzed the specific needs of ethnic groups. The school has established writing portfolios with samples of student work which includes feedback on their strengths and the next learning steps. These are generally well done. Special education staff keep detailed records of the progress of their students. The information is used well to ensure that students receive the specific help they need. This results in positive progress for these students often allowing them to move into general education. English language learners are also carefully tracked and receive support from the classroom teachers as well as from a specialist teacher.

The cabinet tracks and compares the past performance of students with their present levels as a means to determine successful practices which are then shared with the staff. This information is used as a basis to determine specific student needs and to request additional intervention services. The school is also involved in comparing classes and

grades to determine progress and the effectiveness of teaching. Students who are performing above grade level are identified to participate in a Regents program as a part of the enrichment plan. The principal productively compares his school with similar schools, especially those in the Core Knowledge network to ensure that the school is working 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 proficient.

The principal and his cabinet work well to together. They are focused on reviewing plans and evaluating the effectiveness of the school in reaching its goals. Appropriate long range goals have been established and these are based upon the cabinet’s review of the data. The Core Knowledge program was recently introduced using an interdisciplinary plan to involve students to study subjects using higher level thinking and research skills. A school coordinator initiated the process by providing focused training for staff. Common planning time was used by each grade to plan the curriculum and set school and grade goals. This program enhanced the collaborative spirit of the teachers as they identified, shared and reviewed practices as a direct result of the school’s focused plan. The program has been successful in helping the students become more independent learners. The process links each subject area with a common thread and in doing so makes learning more meaningful and enjoyable for students. The plans and goals target students who are performing above grade level to enable them to receive additional enrichment activities. Students in need of support also get extra help as the classroom teachers can focus on these students in small groups to target specific challenges.

The school now applies the workshop model to all subjects. This model uses an instructional program that is student centered and consistently applied across the school. As a result of these changes to the school’s processes, the teachers are now focused to a much greater extent on individual and small group learning. Samples of student work are displayed and maintained in portfolios as a means to judge the effectiveness of the writing plan. Writing samples in the portfolio are standards based and graded using a school rubric. This forms the basis for immediate feedback to students that is focused and clear. Although it does not tell them how much progress they are making throughout the year. The cabinet meets regularly to review the instructional plans and goals and this has resulted in many changes to programs that have increased their effectiveness.

The parents and students are very clear about the high expectations that the school sets for the children. The parents feel that the school communicates well with them, allowing for a timely sharing of information. The school leaders share data, plans and goals with the staff, parents and students, which helps everyone focus on the next learning steps. The students view the school positively because they feel they are an important part of the goal setting process.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school employs the mandated curriculum and has identified additional supplementary programs to support students in greatest need. The principal is aware that these additional programs are needed to meet the needs of both the elementary and middle school components of the school. The mandated curriculum in mathematics has built in assessments to track student progress. Additional interim assessments that are selected by the region provide meaningful information about the needs of classes and the achievement of goals. The English language arts program uses a variety of tracking tools to determine movement towards achieving school and grade goals. The Core Knowledge program has additional assessments that are standards based. These measure children’s higher order thinking skills with specific benchmarks for achievement. The program’s skill goals are consistent for all students, yet the pacing does not meet the needs of all learners. Teachers have been working to differentiate instruction in the area of literacy and are now looking to establish differentiated groups in all areas of learning, but this is just at an early stage of development and has not yet taken hold.

The leadership of the school makes good use of scheduling and budgeting decisions to focus on improving planning and instruction. The systems it has introduced include a formal common planning time of one double period each week for teachers to receive training, review data and identify strategies that help students to learn more. Other strategies include the employment of additional academic intervention teachers to provide instruction to small groups of students in greatest need, and by securing a facilitator to train the staff and purchase sufficient resources to the implement the Core Knowledge Program.

Students find learning enjoyable and are engaged by the challenging curriculum. Teachers work collaboratively within their grade to develop engaging, student-centered lessons. The students feel well respected by their teachers and can trust them when they have an academic or personal concern. Teachers treat students respectfully and are committed to improving student achievement. As a result, students behave well and apply themselves to their learning. The school values good attendance and the students look forward to coming to school.

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 proficient.

The principal and a school committee select staff based upon their commitment to work collaboratively as part of a team. They are also hired based on their capability to be continuous learners and to utilize data as a means of maximizing learning. The professional development plan is based upon training the faculty to support their efforts in working with the learning styles of all students and providing strategies to maximize student strengths. Teachers are beginning to be trained in using specific strategies which are more uniform across the school. The professional development plan is focused on providing the staff with an understanding of the uses of data, such as applying a rubric in a uniform way when looking at student work. The data is used by the teachers to discuss, in

their common planning sessions, ways to group students based upon their needs as well as to develop an item analysis of State practice test results as away to analyze progress, but this is not yet done on a consistent basis.

The principal has a strong presence around the school. He frequently conducts formal and informal classroom observations, taking a snapshot of lessons and providing constructive feedback. Teachers have had the opportunity to observe other teachers, but this is not developed enough to allow for self-evaluation and peer-evaluation activities to take place regularly. Teachers work in teams to plan, evaluate results and revise plans. An example of this effective collaboration resulted in changes being made to the extended day program where the instruction became more focused than it was previously. Another example was when students who were originally placed in small groups, were found to be misplaced, the school moved to reconfigure each group to better serve the students.

The good team practice that exists within the school is due to the many changes that have made by the principal in the two years he has been the school leader. He is well respected and has the capacity to bring about more positive change. He is accessible to the students, staff and parents. They understand that issues will be solved quickly and fairly. The principal did not initially have the support of an assistant principal, but led the school capably, maintaining high standards. The school is a safe and an enjoyable place for students, which results in a school that runs smoothly. At this time the school does not partner with any youth development groups to support academic goals for students.

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 leadership monitors classes and programs on a weekly basis, assessing the quality of teaching and learning. Diagnostic and interim assessments are analyzed as a means to record student progress, yet these results are not reviewed frequently enough to note the effectiveness of plans and interventions. Data is analyzed and decisions are made to implement new programs and revise existing plans based on school generated data. Data analysis sheets are used effectively to compare the progress of students within and across classes. Student progress is evaluated by teachers with the support of the coaches and the staff developer. The school leaders take part in these meetings to evaluate the levels of progress and to determine the next learning steps.

The principal's cabinet is an effective team that has brought about change through the careful implementation of new programs or the thoughtful revision of existing plans. The cabinet has responded flexibly to change school practices by ensuring that there is sufficient training and collaboration to positively impact student learning and progress. While this has had a positive impact on student learning, some aspects of the program need to be more frequently monitored in a more systematic way.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Belle Harbor School (PS 114)	∅	✓	+
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	