



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Glen Oaks School**

**Public School 115**

**80 – 51 261st Street  
Queens  
NY 11004**

**Principal: James J Ambrose**

**Dates of review: November 14 - 16, 2006**

**Reviewer: Leo Connolly**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 115 is an elementary school located in Floral Park, Queens. It has 444 students ranging from pre-kindergarten to grade 5. In addition it also has two District 75 classes for the hearing impaired. Students come from a range of backgrounds with 64% Asian-Pacific Islander, 10% Hispanic, 10% Black and 16% White. Approximately 18% are special education students and 14% are English language learners. Recent attendance rates have been at 97% plus. The school is currently undergoing a major capital building improvement plan.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school outperforms the performance objectives set for it but still strives to achieve more.
- Data is analyzed thoroughly and used by teachers to reflect on what has been learned and to plan the next steps for students.
- There are good procedures in place to measure all students' progress which contribute to ensuring that previous learning is built upon effectively.
- The school has well developed and effective systems to support all students.
- The school has many exciting extra curricular activities for the students.
- A very strong partnership has been forged between parents and staff.
- Staff consider the school to be an exciting place in which to work and there is a clear sense of collegiality and unity amongst the teachers at the school.
- The school has excellent links with external providers who offer a range of enrichment activities for the students that are much appreciated by both children and parents.
- The principal is an effective leader who is continuing to make a difference with his high profile around the school providing support for students and staff alike.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the students' use of technology across the curriculum preparing them for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Ensure that grade 3 and 5 English language arts students make the same or better rate of progress as grade 4 students.
- Ensure that grade 4 students in mathematics make the same or a better rate of progress as grade 3 and 5 students.
- Though teaching is good overall there is capacity amongst the staff for the process of peer observations to be further developed beyond the grades and across the school.
- Extend the school's use of data to identify those students who are excelling to ensure that they continue to be appropriately challenged.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well developed school.**

Since taking charge at the school just over three years ago, the principal has been successful in making PS 115 a fully inclusive school where all students are welcome despite whatever learning difficulties they may have. There is a culture of mutual respect and trust within a framework of high expectations, encouragement and challenge. The intervention strategies for special education students are a particularly strong feature of this school as are the after school activities and extended day provision.

### 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 supplements data supplied by the City and State with assessments such as the Rigby Benchmark Reading Kit, the Princeton Review, and the Early Childhood Literacy assessment System. In addition the school uses independent learning software such as Accelerated Reader. The school mathematics program has built in assessments and teachers also discuss the progress of students in reading and writing on a daily basis at grade conferences. As these assessments are school based, there is a much quicker response to issues thrown up by the assessments. Hence teachers are able to adapt and modify the curricula for individual students thus ensuring there is appropriate differentiation within the classroom. The school also makes use of the Grow report which is intended for parents but is eagerly awaited by the teachers. This report provides the school with an item analysis that is then used in grade conferences to identify students who border grade boundaries. This in turn informs the teaching program and the individual students' program.

Although there are different groupings of students within the school, it is the policy of the school that all children should be seen and treated as individuals and that the curriculum must be matched to their individual needs. The school collects and uses data to inform its decision making with regard to those students who are most at risk. but it does not yet use data to look at other groups within the school, for example, by ethnic background or gender. The school continues to exceed its Annual Yearly Progress target and its Annual Measurable Objective, which is a reflection of the care taken in ensuring that student's work is closely matched to their needs. Although the school has a larger percentage of special education students than similar schools it still outperforms those schools in English language arts achievement and mathematics achievement at all levels.

The care with which the school leadership analyzes the data and the use to which is put by the teachers is ensuring that achievement remains high and that individual student needs are met.

**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 assessment of an individual student’s work enables each teacher to identify the next steps in his or her learning. The use of individual student conferences contributes to the setting of goals for the students so that students are clear about what their next steps are. Though the focus of assessment is on the individual student, the school has developed collaborative approaches to assessment through the monthly grade conferences. The data is analyzed carefully and teachers plan their lessons accordingly, adapting content and presentation to meet the needs of the students. Although the conferences provide an opportunity for grade teachers to share teaching strategies and to look at alternative methods of presentation to maximize student achievement they are not yet used to compare performance across either grades or classrooms.

When a student is identified as having difficulties the school responds initially by providing that child with a ‘mini lesson.’ If difficulties continue then the school responds in a variety of ways depending upon the severity of the difficulty. The school has a number of particularly effective programs to help students ranging from the after school academic intervention services to referrals to the Pupil Personnel Team. In addition there are ‘Push-in’ and ‘Pull out’ intervention strategies that are geared to ensuring that no student is left behind. The school is very focused on preventing underachievement and because of the quality of the assessments and the attention to detail no student ‘slips through the net.’

Parents are very supportive of the school and its staff and in turn the teachers greatly appreciate the support given by parents. They are kept informed of what is happening in school and of any issues relating to their children. The involvement of parents at an early stage has helped to foster the climate of trust and mutual respect.

**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.**

As a result of being a school in good standing, PS 115 is exempt from the mandated curriculum in English language arts and mathematics. The curriculum, in addition to having a focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills, benefits from an emphasis on the arts, particularly drama and music. The social studies program is helping to engage and motivate students, particularly with the theme based approach that is being used. The increase in time allocated for science has seen an improvement in student achievement at levels 3 and 4. The development of class libraries with suitable graded books and genres in addition to the parent run school library is helping to motivate students to read more and encouraging a love of reading. Information technology is not used extensively across the curriculum as yet but the recent installation of a wireless internet system opens up opportunities for the development of this area and introducing the students and staff to the concept of e-learning.

The school has recently purchased a number of Global Position Systems which will be used to enrich the curriculum and introduce students to the concepts longitude and latitude

in a meaningful way. Students see this as having fun and as such are very well motivated in school. Attendance is well above the average and also above similar schools. The school has a clear and effective systems for dealing with attendance issues should they arise.

The respect that students show to their teachers is reciprocated and as such the school is a community where students feel safe and enjoy coming to school. The concern for the welfare of its students demonstrated by the school is very much appreciated by parents.

**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 has developed a policy of 'growing' its own staff through a comprehensive professional development program and succession planning. The principal is very focused in what he is looking for in new members of staff and in what he expects from his existing staff. He appoints on the basis of the candidate being skilled in the content area, having positive, caring attitudes to students and staff alike, being loyal to the school and having high expectations and high energy. Only if these attributes are not available within school will there be an appointment from outside the school.

It is recognized that the use and interpretation of data is key to ensuring that any under achievement is minimized and that student needs are met. Teachers are becoming more and more comfortable with using data in this way and the literacy coach provides valuable support and guidance to those colleagues who need support in utilizing the data to inform the teaching plan.

The school actively supports the professional development of its staff. Although opportunities included both in-house provision and the use of external providers the school does not yet have a formal program of inter class visitations or peer evaluation. Decisions about professional development are based on student need and are aligned with the school's themes and initiatives. The school works closely with the Teachers College at Columbia University and makes good use of the Colleges' literacy program. Teachers also have opportunities to make suggestions about the direction their individual professional development is taking.

The principal maintains a high profile amongst parents, staff, and students alike. He is seen by all parties to be very approachable and supportive. He has created a culture of high expectations and mutual support which has been very effective in ensuring that all members of staff are working towards the same aim. He is frequently in classrooms, informally observing staff, talking with students, getting involved and looking at their work as well as carrying out formal observations. He looks to praise and suggest rather than criticize and condemn. As a result of this he is very well respected by his colleagues and held in high esteem. He is making a difference to the life opportunities of his students.

The extensive after school program particularly the 'Y' program, is very effective in meeting student needs mainly because the school has worked closely with the provider to ensure that it builds on what the students are doing in school.

**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.**

Despite being a high achieving the school there is no evidence of complacency as the school continues to look at different ways of raising student achievement even higher. Assessment is an ongoing process in all areas of the curriculum. There are weekly grade conferences where progress is discussed and portfolios updated. Teachers are aware of how what they do in the classroom relates directly to the agreed goals. Teachers make good use of the available data to review how successful their plans have been in achieving their stated goals. The flexibility that this brings means that the school and teachers can respond quickly to the changing needs of their students thereby maximizing achievement and personal success.

The systems and structures within the school are totally geared to responding to the outcome of assessments. The pupil personnel team meets with principal every two weeks to discuss individual student concerns and their progress. As a result of this teaching plans and the Comprehensive Education Plan may be adapted and modified or further recommendations made. The extended day sessions are organized to support students with identified weaknesses providing very small group tuition until academic levels improve. As students improve they move out the program to make way for other students who have been identified as being in need of extra support. All special education students and English language learners attend these programs to improve their proficiency. The success the special education students and English language learners achieve in the State tests is a testament to the success of the program.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Glen Oaks School (PS115)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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.			<b>X</b>
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.		<b>X</b>	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			<b>x</b>
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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 State 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 State 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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			<b>X</b>