



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Public School 133
248 - 05 86th Avenue
Queens
11426**

Principal: Shelley Steppel

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Reviewer: Tim Boyce

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

This elementary school provides education for 510 students from pre-kindergarten through to grade 5. Just over half of the students are from Asian backgrounds and the school is admitting a growing number of students from India, many of whom have limited mastery of the English language. A further quarter of the students are White. The remaining students are mainly from Hispanic families, with a small proportion of Black students. There are a higher proportion of Asian students than is usually found in similar low-need schools. A significant proportion of students in the school are disadvantaged when they take State and City assessment tests because test forms are not available in their home language. This diminishes the scores gained by several minority groups. Just under one-tenth of the students are English language learners, but this proportion has increased significantly in the last two years.

The proportion of students with Title 1 eligibility is lower than that found in similar low-need schools and is much lower than usually found throughout the City. As a result the school is not entitled to any additional funding for these students. At over 95%, attendance is much higher than is usually found either in similar schools or in the City as a whole. The school is located in a spacious and beautifully-maintained building which features high-quality displays of student work in classrooms and in public areas.

Part 2: Overview

This is a highly developed school with many significant strengths and a small number of areas for continued improvement. It takes considerable care to provide its students with a high quality education and is popular with students and staff. Students generally do very well at the school and are extremely well prepared for the next stages in their education.

What the school does well

- The principal and the assistant principal, with the support of the staff, provide the school with very clear and effective leadership.
- The staff all work together well as a team that is committed to helping all pupils achieve their full potential.
- Staff share ideas and approaches willingly and are constantly learning from each other as they seek to further develop their professional skills.
- Staff work exceedingly hard to make classrooms and shared areas bright and stimulating areas in which students are happy to learn.
- Students are nurtured carefully by staff who know them well and help them to develop into happy and confident learners.
- Following the example set by the staff, students always treat each other with the utmost respect.
- Academic and personal standards are well above those usually found either in similar schools or in the City.
- The school makes exceptional use of data to match work carefully to the needs of all the students, particularly special education students and English language learners.
- The school has an excellent working relationship with parents who support the school exceedingly well.
- The school building is maintained to a very high standard.

What the school needs to improve

- The school can take even better use of available data to track the progress of different groups of students.
- The differentiation of the work for higher achieving students can be further developed so that these students are consistently challenged to reach even higher standards.
- Staff members can benefit from even more frequent opportunities to meet together to discuss the day-to-day progress of students.
- Professional development activities can be more frequently tailored to provide activities that are aligned to the needs of the school as well as the individual teacher.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

This school uses most of the available data very effectively to match work carefully to the needs of its students. All areas are similarly well developed and the school keeps a very careful watch on the progress of all its students as they move through the school. It is now also aware of the need to track trends in student performance with even more care to ensure that each student makes the best possible progress regardless of ethnicity or gender. A particular strength of the school is the way in which teaching staff constantly modify individual and group programs to meet the changing needs of students. The school is particularly effective in meeting the needs of English language learners and special education students, and is aware of the need to further develop its programs for higher achieving students.

The success of the school can be traced directly to the talented, highly organized and very determined principal who, over the past four years, has managed to further develop what was already a highly successful school. This has been achieved with the skilled support of her assistant principal and the hard working and committed members of the school community.

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 makes effective use of a wide range of assessment data, including detailed portfolios of work, to maintain a clear picture of the academic and personal development of each student. Test data is analyzed carefully by the principal to ensure that each individual, grade level and class is making at least the expected progress. She is now aware that greater care needs to be taken to track trends in the relative performance of different ethnic and gender groups. The progress of each student is tracked carefully by teachers and support staff, and any significant factors are discussed and resolved at grade level meetings. Particular care is taken to track the progress of English language learners and special education students. The school is aware of the need to provide additional challenge for higher achieving students.

The principal and the staff have a clear understanding of the school's performance relative to similar schools and schools citywide. As a result, the school continues to improve. Because of its close attention to detail and the high levels of management organization, staff and students know what is expected of them and achieve high academic and personal standards.

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 and the staff use the data at their disposal effectively to set realistic and challenging goals for all its students, but are aware that more could be done to challenge higher achieving students by further refining the way in which work is matched to individual needs. The goals set for specific students are reviewed regularly at the frequent grade conferences when staff meet together to discuss the progress of any particular student that is causing concern. In addition, the teaching staff maintain detailed records on the progress of each student and are constantly adjusting their teaching programs to meet the needs of the students in their teaching groups. The school is particularly careful in its monitoring of the most vulnerable students and is most diligent in the tracking of the progress made by special education students and English language learners. Teachers and learning support staff work together superbly as a cohesive team, seeking specialist support as required.

The very clear expectations that instructional staff have of the students is clearly explained and establish a very clear picture of how well each student is doing in each curricular area and what is needed to elevate performance to an even higher level. The school generally has an excellent partnership with parents, who are fully involved in the learning process. In addition to the frequent reports they receive on how well their children are progressing, they are invited to come in to school at regular intervals to examine work and discuss broad educational issues. The school organizes regular workshop sessions for parents so that important new curricular developments can be explained. As a result, parents know how to best support their children both at school and at home. This has a very positive impact on achievement and standards as students understand exactly what is expected of them and work hard to meet these goals.

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 selects its curriculum with great care to meet the needs of individual students that are identified through regular analysis of the available assessment data. Regular interim assessments are administered and the school has a clear picture of the ongoing progress of each cohort and class in each curricular area as they move through the school. The school is now aware of the need to track the trends in the progress of specific groups of students with even greater precision to ensure that different ethnic and gender groups, for example, are progressing equally well in all subjects.

Instructional time and other resources are allocated carefully to meet the needs of the students as indicated by the regular assessments. The instructional staff are held responsible by the principal for the progress of all of the students in their charge. Subject coaches for English language arts and mathematics are very influential in the school and are very effective both in supporting staff and in sharing best practice throughout the

school. Because of this, an open and positive learning environment flourishes with staff freely exchanging the most successful ideas and techniques. This has a very significant impact on the quality of instruction throughout the school, providing all students access to the ideas and skills of the best teachers. Teachers plan interesting and stimulating lessons, and are careful to match work accurately to the needs of each individual. Ongoing work is taking place to increase the challenge provided for the higher achieving students.

Relationships throughout the school are very positive. As a result, behavior is excellent and almost no time is lost in lessons because students are not fully on task. Students and teachers like and respect each other and students report that there are many adults that they could discuss a problem with if one arose. The school follows up on all absences diligently and any identified patterns of absence trigger immediate action. However, because school is such an interesting and friendly place, attendance is high.

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 takes particular care in selecting its staff and as a result the quality of teaching in the school is particularly high. Great care is also taken in the support and professional development of all staff, with the subject coaches playing a very significant role in this process. Staff are encouraged and eager to attend teacher development workshops and to visit other schools. However, these workshops are not always fully aligned to the needs of the students that are identified by the available data, and there is not always sufficient whole school staff development time available for staff to share their experiences with their professional colleagues. All staff have a clear focus on helping students to achieve their potential by making the very best use of all available performance data to match work to the needs of students, particularly special education students and English language learners. These students do particularly well as a result.

Staff meet as often as they can in various different teams to plan and revise work programs and to discuss the progress of individuals and groups of students. More frequent opportunities to complete this vital work would benefit the school. Many staff choose to give up their own time to attend additional meetings of this type. The school uses performance data effectively when making decisions about future professional development and has, for example, already spent a day discussing ways in which the programs of instruction for higher achieving students could be improved.

The school is exceedingly well managed by the principal and her assistant principal, and is a highly organised and well-run institution. The principal is highly respected by staff and students, who are used to seeing her each day both in corridors and in classrooms. Students appropriately believe the school to be a very effective place and particularly enjoy lessons in physical education, information technology and art. The coaches for English language arts and mathematics work very effectively supporting and developing staff throughout the school. The well developed team teaching program makes it is common to find teachers working together in pairs. This enables teachers to share techniques and to further develop their professional skills. The school has excellent relationships with outside organizations which are used effectively to enable students to meet their academic and personal goals.

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 is very self-aware and is constantly seeking new ways to improve the opportunities that are made available to students and to raise standards of achievement. All school planning – from the comprehensive and detailed comprehensive education plan right down to the smallest amendment to an individual education plan – have interim goals that are reviewed regularly and adjusted as necessary based on changing needs that are identified by data from the wide range of assessments that are administered in the school.

The comparative performance of students in different classes and subject areas is monitored rigorously by the principal. Where significant discrepancies are identified, immediate action is taken to remedy any problems that arise or to deal with any identified shortcomings. As a result, little time is lost and progress is good because programs of work are very accurately matched to the needs of all the students. This has proven very effective at the individual level. The school is now aware of the need to monitor even more carefully the relative progress of particular subgroups within school. Hard work is being undertaken to further develop new, even more challenging, programs to further accelerate the learning of the higher achieving students.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 133 (PS 133)	∅	✓	+
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