



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Langston Hughes School**

**Public School 134**

**203-02 109th Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11412**

**Principal: Cheryl Marmon - Halm**

**Dates of review: November 29 - 30, 2006**

**Reviewer: Rowena Onions**

## 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

Public school 134, The Langston Hughes School, is an elementary school, serving an ethnically diverse population. It has 464 kindergarten to grade 5 students. Students come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest proportion (86%) is Black with 9% being Hispanic and with small numbers of students from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. There is a small proportion of English language learners (2%).

Eleven percent are special education needs students. The overall proportion (68%) known to be Title I eligible is below that of similar schools and that of the City as a whole. The proportion of students recently entering the country is 8%, with most of these students coming from Haiti and Guyana. Attendance rates at the school (92.1%) are lower than those in similar schools, but in line with the City as a whole. The school has a relatively stable population, with a number of students having parents who also attended the school. However, overall student stability is somewhat lower than similar and City schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal, assistant principal and staff work hard to promote better achievement.
- The school is making good use of data to analyze strengths and weaknesses in students' achievement in mathematics and English language arts.
- The teachers work well together as a team, supporting each other in both planning work and teaching strategies.
- Students like school and this means that most work hard in class.
- Whole school development planning is correctly focused on areas that data has shown to be in need of improvement.
- Professional development is well linked to areas that data analysis and classroom observations have shown to be less effective.
- Data is used well to assign students to additional support and programs that assist them to achieve better.
- The school works hard, with increasing success, to include parents in their child's education.
- The principal and assistant principal are well respected by students, staff and parents and this assists them to make changes to improve the education provided.

### What the school needs to improve

- Seek a clear, simple system to show the year on year progress of individuals and groups of students.
- Use this data to more closely analyze the achievement of groups of students, especially that of boys and girls, so that action to improve can be more clearly focused.
- Continue to extend the use of different teaching strategies, especially opportunities for practical activity.
- Improve the impact of conferencing with students by providing them with one or two specific things to work on before their next conference.
- Provide teachers with more opportunities to observe each other in class.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school overall.**

Staff at the Langston Hughes School are dedicated to helping students to develop both personally and academically. Each student is known well to a wide group of adults, including the principal, and their individual achievement is closely monitored especially in English language arts and mathematics. This monitoring is being used effectively to help teachers know the next steps that their students need to take. The school is making increasingly good use of the data supplied to them through formal testing and is eager to find even better ways of doing this. This is work in progress and the school is aware of what is needed to increase its impact. Teachers try hard to interest students, particularly by thinking about the different ways in which they can present work to the students, but the school rightly identifies that this is an area in which improvements can be made. Staff are a team working to help students and the students are fully aware of this. They like their teachers and feel secure in school. Special education students and those in most need of improvement are carefully attended to, both in class and through additional programs.

### 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 has good systems for collecting and collating achievement information about each student. Data is aggregated to show strengths and weaknesses in English language arts and mathematics by grade and by class. This provides good information for fine tuning programs of work. Information is gathered through formal testing and from day to day assessment and student conferencing. Thus, teachers have a realistic yet objective view of their students' achievements.

The school has secure knowledge of the overall performance of groups of students, for example those of different ethnicities. This information is not, however, further broken down to show finer detail, for example to show the relative performance of boys and girls in different grades and classes. The issue concerning gender requires particular attention as there are fairly large gaps (10 -15%) between the achievement of boys and girls, especially in English language arts. This lack of more detailed analysis is, in part, a result of the lack of a simple, clear system for showing the year to year progress of individuals and groups that would make such analysis easier.

The progress of students with additional needs is tracked well. This includes the progress of students in intervention groups such as those receiving 'Reading Recovery', as well as special education students and English language learners.

The school is careful to examine its performance relative to that of other schools and is interested in learning from the experience and expertise of others. School improvement is identified and celebrated, while the school continues to strive for higher student achievement.

**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 overall, with some well developed features.**

School data is used appropriately to set goals for overall whole school improvement and these are set out in the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan. Data is discussed collaboratively by groups of staff, for example at grade meetings, and used well to set goals for the improvement of curricular weakness in English language arts and mathematics. These goals are set using the aggregated data noted in the previous section and are specific to grades and classes. It is expected that students will make significant progress in the areas identified. The work of all staff members is well focused on overall improvement in students’ work.

Clear emphasis is placed on helping special education students and students who are having difficulties in their learning. Well targeted additional support and programs assist these students in raising their achievement and meeting the goals set for them, for instance, those set out in their individual education plans. Similarly goals are set for English language learners that help them to succeed. Goals for the improved achievement for other groups of students, for example, for boys’ achievement in English language arts, are not, however, sufficiently considered or specified.

Students are clear about what goals they are working towards over time and in each unit of work. They use the rubrics supplied to assist them to do this. The weekly conferencing is a good system for providing them with more immediate goals. This is not yet, however, always as effective as it might be, because the sessions sometimes lack a clear summing up. This means that the student is not sufficiently clear about the one or two aspects of their work that he or she should be working to improve before the next conference.

The school makes good efforts to include parents, providing them with suitable opportunities to discuss their child’s work and to understand their goals for improvement. This work is increasingly successful and is having an increasing impact on students’ progress.

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

**This area of the school’s work is proficient overall, with some well developed features.**

Work to use data to align the curriculum and instruction to students’ needs is a matter of ongoing work and improvement in the school. The aggregated data on students is now beginning to allow teachers to fine tune programs of work and to spend more time on

aspects that are proving difficult for students. Teachers are responsible and held accountable for planning this work and are provided with good opportunities to do this collaboratively in grade teams.

In class, teachers differentiate work through providing extra support for those who have difficulties. Additional programs, for instance Reading Recovery and Wilson reading assist with this. There is not, however, always sufficient extra challenge provided for the most able students. Teachers try hard to engage their students. This is most effective when the range of teaching strategies is wider and there is sufficient practical activity to help students understand and remember what they are learning. Students commented that they felt they would benefit from more of this practical activity and this is a view supported by the principal who is working with staff towards this end.

The needs identified by the analysis of school data are appropriately taken into account when considering the allocation of budget and assignment of staff. The school is good at seeking additional grants to help them to address issues identified. A grant has, for example, been gained to help challenge more able students through a computer project. The effect of additional programs is considered when deciding on those that should be provided each year. Time is generally used wisely to promote student achievement, however, limited accommodation and staffing is currently severely restricting students' access to physical education.

Staff know and care for all their students. Parents are particularly impressed with the knowledge that staff and the principal have of all of the students in the school. Students are confident in the knowledge that teachers will support them, both personally and in helping them to improve their work. The school is focused on improving student attendance, investigating thoroughly causes of absence and taking well considered action when necessary.

**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 overall, with some well developed features.**

The school takes a well thought out approach to the appointment of staff, seeking both committed educators and those who can add expertise in a range of ways, including a facility with technology and an understanding of how to use data. Teachers already on the staff are actively helped to understand and work with the data provided for them.

Professional development is linked well to whole school priorities as identified from the data. It is also used well to address issues related to grade or individual teacher's areas of need. Good use is made of the school's literacy and mathematics coaches, as well as outside support from Teachers College, to do this. The principal and assistant principal are knowledgeable about the strengths and areas for development among staff. This knowledge is gained from daily walk-throughs and formal class observations as well as from scrutiny of the data. Thus, teachers are helped to be increasingly successful as well as being held to account for the progress made by their students.

Grade meetings are productive in promoting achievement because staff are self-evaluative and are constantly seeking to find better ways to approach instruction. They have,

however, rightly observed that their professional development could be even further promoted if there was more opportunity for them to observe each other teaching in class.

Both principal and assistant principal are well respected and this allows them to promote change effectively. The results of their work can be seen in the steady rise in student achievement. The school runs well on a day to day basis, with communications being good and by all staff working well together as a team.

Productive use is made of outside services to extend the school's work. This includes links with after school facilities and with services to support the learning and development of special education 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 school's Comprehensive Education Plan is well thought through. It is a collaborative document drawn up by the school leadership team. This team reviews the progress in implementing the plan frequently and uses the data collected to evaluate its effectiveness in terms of the goals set for overall school improvement. Interim goals are usually in the form of descriptions of activities to be undertaken, rather than in terms of the required interim rise in student achievement that would be needed to ensure that the final goal will be met. Thus, although the school has knowledge of the impact of improvement work on the achievement of individual students, this is not yet being fully utilized to provide a secure measure of whether this interim progress is sufficient. The setting of more specific goals for the progress of groups of students would allow more detailed ongoing review of school improvement.

The school is flexible in its approach to its ongoing work. The regular monitoring of individual student's achievement allows the school to alter direction where there is a need. The close evaluation of student performance on the recent Princeton Review, for example, has precipitated a review of teacher assignment. In order to gather together all the students in a grade who have shown difficulty in a particular aspect of work, the school is planning to try moving students between classes for a short time each day, thus maximizing the use of teacher time.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Langston Hughes School (PS134)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<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>		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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>	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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<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.		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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<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>		X	
<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 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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X	
<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>		x	