



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Gwendoline N Alleyne School

Public School 152

**33-52 62 Street
Queens
NY 11377**

Principal: Vincent J Vitolo

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Reviewer: Thomas J Clark

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 Gwendoline Alleyne School is a large elementary school located in the Woodside section of Queens. It serves approximately 1,250 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6, and exceeds its capacity. Designated as a Federal Themed Magnet School: Authors and Illustrators, students learn to use technology to publish periodicals and to celebrate their writing. The school has a culturally diverse student body. About 47% of the students come from Asian and other backgrounds, 44% of students are Hispanic, 8% are White and 1% are Black. The proportion of students considered recent immigrants (15%) is almost double that of similar schools and the City, with students most often coming from Bangladesh, India and Mexico.

Slightly more than a third (38%) of the students receive English language learner services, including a Spanish bi-lingual program. A relatively small number of students (8%) receive special education services. With 80% of the students Title 1 eligible, the school exceeds the figure for similar schools and the City. The student attendance rate (94%) is higher than in similar schools and in the City as a whole.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides exceptional leadership in moving the school forward through continuous improvement.
- All students are enthusiastic learners and demonstrate self-motivation in completing their assignments.
- Formal and informal data is gathered to systematically identify strengths and areas for improvement of individual students, groups, classes and grades.
- Administrators and teachers use data frequently to monitor individual student progress and to devise next steps in the learning process.
- The curriculum is reviewed frequently and adjustments made to better meet individual and group needs identified by data.
- Teachers are accountable for the progress of every student and differentiate instruction to meet the specific needs of each student.
- Professional development is very effective and differentiated through data collected on teacher need, with teacher collaboration and sharing playing major roles in its success.
- School resources are very effectively allocated.
- Relationships with external services and providers have a significant impact on student learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop interim assessments in science and social studies to allow more frequent monitoring of student progress.
- Continue to develop teacher skills in maintaining conference notes to be more specific as to student strengths and areas for improvement.
- Develop interim measurable school goals/benchmarks for action plans to facilitate short-term tracking of their implementation and impact on student learning.
- Revisit all components of the school plan more frequently to determine the extent of their implementation and impact, and to make any mid-course corrections necessary.
- Find ways of involving more parents in leadership roles in the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

In only his second year, the principal has brought significant changes in the way the school collects and organizes data. Administrators and teachers now collect and use data that is more specific to the strengths and areas for improvement for individual students, groups, classes and grades. For example, the use of conferences notes has been implemented and emphasized as an important source of data to inform instructional practice. Administrators and teachers have well-organized data binders enabling them to use data more easily to assess current status and to plan next steps.

School planning is participatory and collaborative, with teachers, parents and administrators represented on the school leadership team that makes important decisions regarding the school's direction. Based on the analysis of data, the school has implemented programs to address the needs of its English language learners and its special education students. Academic intervention services are effectively provided to students with need through the use of eight-week cycles to monitor the impact of interventions and to make changes when progress is not made.

The introduction this year of the University of Connecticut's School-wide Enrichment Model has enabled the school to challenge students at all academic levels through engagement in 22 interest clusters. Teachers are held accountable and work to differentiate instruction for all students. Staff time is rostered to permit push-in and pull-out support for students and to allow team planning and professional development time during common preparation periods. Teachers' professional development is extremely effective, in part because of the administrators' deep knowledge of each teacher's strengths and areas for improvement.

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.

During the past two years the principal has moved the school from just looking at levels data from the State and City assessments to collecting data on skills and conceptual knowledge on both formal and informal assessments. Data from State and City English language arts and mathematics assessments has been organized by individual student skill performance for each class and distributed to teachers to be used for grouping and planning instruction. Kindergarten through grade three teachers use the results of the Early Childhood Language Arts Assessment–2 to track student progress. The collection of informal data in the form of conference notes in English language arts and mathematics is a priority, permitting the ongoing identification of individual student strengths and needs, leading to informed next steps in each student's learning plan. Not all teachers are proficient yet at using the conference note process, however. The use of data to guide instructional decisions in science and social studies is work in progress.

Data for all assessments is disaggregated with special focus on the progress of English language learners and special education students. Through analysis of data for the English language learners it was discovered that even though many students passed the English proficiency exam, they were not scoring at acceptable levels on literacy assessments, and were subsequently targeted for additional support. Holdover students are another group whose progress is carefully monitored by the school.

Data comparisons are made frequently by the administration and school leadership team at all levels of organization. Students are tracked year to year to determine if their levels of proficiency are growing, as measured by the State and City assessments. Growth is also tracked in terms of reading and mathematics levels. Through tracking individual student growth over time it was discovered that long-term English language learners showed significantly less growth than short-term students, leading to plans for additional support. Data is also compared by group, class and grade. Similar schools data such as that provided on the school report card, and recently by the New York Times, is compared with data from the school.

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.

School planning has become a collaborative process under the leadership of the principal. The school leadership team, including teachers elected by the staff and parents, conducts an extensive needs assessment each year, focused on trends in school data and review of the impact of the previous year’s school plan. The team conducts its own quality review by selecting a priority area of the school plan and visiting classrooms to determine the status of the selected component. Findings and suggestions for the new plan are shared with teachers for their input. Long-term goals are set by grade, based on the needs identified by the data. Action plans are developed to address each goal, but do not include goals or objectives for short-term monitoring.

The school plans drive instruction, especially in English language arts and mathematics. The plans focus the staff on meeting the needs of all students, but with special emphasis on English language learners and special education students through the implementation of collaborative team teaching classes and the institution of eight-week review cycles for students receiving academic intervention services. The close attention paid to these students enables them to make good progress.

Through the use of the conference notes process, teachers share their high expectations with each student through identification of specific skills and strategies the student should work on before the next conference. Teachers also set monthly goals for each student in English language arts and mathematics. Teachers constantly provide encouragement and support to all students to reach higher. The two parents on the school leadership team are instrumental in helping the school set challenging goals for the school, but participation by other parents in the planning process is limited.

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 has selected both its science and reading programs for their ability to generate data for monitoring student progress and to provide instructional materials at varying levels to facilitate differentiation. The reading program aligns well with the mandated balanced literacy program, and the science program follows the mandated pacing calendar. Through participation in the University of Connecticut’s School-wide Enrichment Model the school established 22 student interest-based clusters to augment instruction in science and social studies, enabling students to engage in areas of their own interest and to develop higher order critical thinking skills. Student learning in the interest clusters is determined by the quality of their presentation of the required culminating project.

Teachers are held and feel accountable to provide differentiated instruction to maximize student growth. Teachers have detailed knowledge of each student’s strengths and needs and during regular teacher conference must show the administrators that they are tracking student progress through their conference notes and updated data binders. Not all teachers have mastered the conference note technique, however.

The school uses its budgetary, staffing and scheduling decisions extremely well to address needs identified by analysis of student data, thereby ensuring that the necessary support to have students progress is provided. For example, the purchase of multi-level instructional materials to support differentiation, and the hiring of cluster teachers to provide science, social studies, art, music, physical education and academic intervention services have had a measurable and positive impact on student outcomes.

All students are enthusiastic learners and go the extra step in completing their assignments. The students feel respected by the teachers and are very comfortable going to a staff member in the event of need. Student attendance is a school priority and is very good, with frequent rewards and celebrations for those with perfect attendance at varying intervals during the school year.

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.

Under the principal’s leadership the school has developed extremely rigorous criteria for the selection of staff based on the needs of the student population. For example, advertisements for cluster teachers stipulate that the teacher must develop and use interim assessments, provide academic intervention support service, and thoroughly document differentiation of instruction. Prospective teachers are interviewed at job fairs with specific questions aimed at determining the candidate’s knowledge of the use of student data.

Professional development decisions are made according to what is specified in the school plan to address student needs, as well as by the individual needs expressed by teachers and those determined by administrators’ knowledge of both teacher skill levels and data on student outcomes. The school provides multiple opportunities for teachers to upgrade their skills, both in-house and out of school. On-going support is differentiated by teacher

need. Teacher collaboration and peer evaluation in study and grade groups is very strong in the school. Several tenured teachers opted to conduct a teacher performance review project in lieu of a formal observation, and present their final report of project to the staff. This is viewed as a valuable form of professional development by the staff. The high quality of the school's professional development ensures that teachers have the skills required to have their students achieve.

The administrators undertake formal and informal classroom visits frequently. Teachers receive feedback that is viewed as very constructive and non-threatening. Through these frequent classroom visits the administrators have detailed knowledge of each teacher's strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers' classes are covered by support staff to permit regular classroom inter-visitations. All planning activities occur on collaborative teams. Grade-group planning is facilitated through common preparation periods during the school day. Monthly breakfast meetings were instituted by teachers to foster cross-grade planning.

The principal is greatly respected by parents, teachers and students and has brought considerable improvement in just two years. The school runs very smoothly, with excellent support services provided by multiple partnerships and other external groups, including Marquis Studios, who support the arts program, and Scholastic Inc, which provides real-world mentors for student publishing activities.

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 includes objectively measurable long-term goals and action plans designed to address issues for school improvement discovered in the school's thorough needs assessment. While teachers set interim goals for their classes and individual students, measurable interim school goals or objectives to monitor the implementation and impact of its action plans are not yet fully in place.

The administrators and teachers examine student progress regularly across students and classrooms during various collaborative team meetings and, when lack of progress is found, interventions are planned. Continuous review of data also allows the school leadership team to identify issues that need to be addressed in the school plan the following year. The needs assessment process for the Comprehensive Education Plan includes a thorough analysis of the degree of implementation and impact of the current plan. All components of the school plan are not reviewed during regularly scheduled school leadership meetings, however.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Gwendoline N Alleyne (PS 152)	∅	✓	+
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	