



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Kissena School**

**Public School 201**

**65-11 155 Street  
Queens  
NY 11367**

**Principal: Veronica Yurcik**

**Dates of review: November 14 – 15, 2006**

**Reviewer: Charles Lupton**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 201Q is a pre-kindergarten to sixth grade elementary school. It serves a population of 389 students. Most of these live in Pomonok City housing. General education students are placed in heterogeneous classes. Students come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. The greatest proportion (41%) is from Black families, 29% are Hispanic, 17% Asian and 11% White. Twenty two per cent are special education students and 10% are English language learners. The main language spoken is English.

Title 1 eligibility, at 79% is lower than that of similar schools (94%) but higher than City schools (72%). School attendance rates are slightly lower than the city average at just over 90%.

Fourteen students are blind or severely visually impaired. Four of these students are fully integrated in to the school and eleven are taught in a specialist unit.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is very well informed about all school activities and constantly aims to improve all areas of the school with good pedagogical knowledge and tenacity.
- The school collects a good range of data to track students' individual progress in English language arts and mathematics.
- Special education students, especially the blind and visually impaired are integrated well into mainstream classes.
- The teaching staff have a strong, collegiate unity and work in a mutually supportive manner showing good teamwork.
- The quality of the school environment is very good with good displays of student work in the corridors and classrooms, including 'book of the month' displays and an art exhibition.
- The strategies designed to encourage parental involvement in the school and to support families in helping their children to learn at home are well developed and this is reflected in the good level of parental support for the school.
- The school utilizes the reading recovery program very well in order to raise standards and to improve teaching and learning in the school as well as in the district.
- The school provides a very good range of resources including mathematics manipulatives and books for classrooms, the school library and resource base and encourages students to take books home to read.
- In collaborative activities and grade meetings, data is used effectively to support learning for all students including those with special needs.
- The inclusion of at-risk students into the school and the belief that all students can achieve no matter their background is a positive feature of the school.

### What the school needs to improve

- With all interested parties, further improve the utilization of good school-based data to track groups of students and classes and to set challenging targets.
- Use data, including formative assessment, to facilitate differentiation within classes in order to address the needs of individual students, in particular the more able.
- Include interim goals, timelines and success criteria in school development plans in order to monitor progress towards long term aims.
- When implementing new strategies, develop more effective lines of communication to facilitate greater awareness of the reason for change and to maintain commitment.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

The principal and staff constantly strive to improve this school for the benefit of the students. Parents and students hold the principal and the school in high regard. They particularly appreciate the welcoming and friendly atmosphere and the fact that everyone is valued. Students recognize the efforts made by everyone to help them learn. One parent commented, "Teachers go the extra mile." Students feel safe and know they have adults to help them if required. The teamwork shown between staff is a very positive feature and is important to the school's success.

Despite recent improvements in student progress, this is not a complacent school. The entire school community is actively engaged in moving the school forwards. This process is firmly established and the well developed use of all available data is fundamental in driving future improvement. The school uses its own empirical data and other data from, for example, lesson observations, coach feedback and meetings to inform individual instruction, track grades and identify professional development. When data identifies a student whose work is not improving incrementally, remedial action is taken quickly. Data is also being used to identify wider trends in progress for groups of students but the data is not being used as effectively as it could be to track progress and set targets.

### 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 uses data to identify broad trends in school performance and to compare performance with similar and City schools. Additional student data, including the monthly progress in English language arts and mathematics is gathered. Formative assessment is used and report card levels are collated. The combination of this information allows the principal and the cabinet to identify trends in school performance.

Weekly meetings for kindergarten to grade 3 teachers utilize numerical and formative assessment data to monitor performance in English language arts, to inform class groupings and to guide instruction. Every two weeks, similar meetings are held for grades 4 to 6 although, because they use a different scheme of work, the data is less complete and relies heavily on formative assessments and interim testing. The 'Reading Wall' introduced by the English coach provides an effective visual method of tracking individual and grade progress. Reading Recovery is well developed and is targeted effectively at students requiring positive intervention. The school has been able to direct these interventions more effectively this year by analyzing grade data rather than class data.

Trends in mathematics are analyzed using data from monthly unit tests. The coach uses this data to identify gaps in student understanding to inform future instruction. This system is currently being updated to use data more productively in lessons and to support home-

learning. Monthly test results are sent home with suggested developmental activities to improve areas of weakness.

The principal and coaches use individual student data well to identify students for after-school instruction. The progress of special education students, including those who are blind or visually impaired and at-risk, is monitored carefully. The data informs decisions about when these students can take part in general education classes, either temporarily or permanently.

The school has developed good data systems to track individual and grade progress over time. However, the systems currently in place are not wholly effective in identifying trends for some student groups, including higher-achieving students.

**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 school focuses heavily on collecting and collating useful data to monitor individual progress in the short and long term and uses this data well to inform and improve instruction. This has had a positive impact on learning as shown by significant improvements in standards attained. For example, the school has identified the need for reading recovery to support learning and has developed an excellent centre to facilitate this. However, data is not yet used sufficiently well to set challenging, measurable future goals for individuals, classes, grades and the whole school.

The school uses data well to focus on school development. For example, student achievement in English language arts is lower than in mathematics. This led the school to change its English language arts curriculum to one that generates much clearer developmental data, enabling individual and group progress to be tracked more effectively.

The very detailed data collected, is used well by the principal, coaches and teachers to ensure that the needs of the students in greatest need of improvement are met. However, the data does not yet identify and support higher achievers in the same way. The school is aware of this and the Comprehensive Education Plan identifies differentiation as an issue for further improvement.

Parents are very supportive of the school. They appreciate the work of all the staff, particularly the considerable effort made to help parents support their children’s learning. This is achieved through a wide variety of means, including parent workshops and guidelines about how parents can help their children with reading and mathematics.

The school mantra is that everyone can achieve, irrespective of their background. This philosophy is ‘lived’ by everyone associated with the school who all work hard to support the students.

**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.**

Senior leaders monitor instruction carefully in order to identify areas for improvement. For example, the school identified that teaching of mathematics was not as effective as it might be. A coaching program of support and professional development has rectified this, resulting in a marked improvement in implementation and achievement.

The new English language arts curriculum has enabled progress to be monitored more effectively. This has resulted in improved results as underachievement is identified and addressed swiftly. Teachers now report that, in the second year of its implementation, students in their classes are more advanced than they were previously. During the first year of implementation, most coaching support was identified for kindergarten to grade 3 classes. Currently, increased support is being directed at grades 4 to 6.

The improved achievement in English language arts and mathematics are indicative of good staffing decisions to appoint and deploy coaches effectively. The good use of data has clearly highlighted the need for greater differentiation in classes. A current high priority for the school is to ensure that students are even more actively engaged in their work.

Budgeted plans are carefully written to support the school’s work in developing the curriculum and provision. For example, additional books for the school library, central reading resource and class libraries have been provided and their use is actively encouraged to support learning at school and at home.

Staff work hard to respond to individual need and relationships between staff and students are good. Students are respected and know and trust the staff. Good structures are in place to monitor and check absence.

**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.**

Staff are selected through a combination of recommendation and interview, based upon their teaching ability and rapport with students, their ability to be part of a team, their use of data and willingness to undertake continuing professional development. This results in a committed and hardworking team who are constantly striving to improve provision for the students.

The principal and assistant principal observe lessons regularly and ‘walk-through’ frequently. Developmental feedback is given in writing and verbally with teachers being accountable for their own and their students’ performance. Coaches work in classes to identify areas for improvement then support colleagues through team teaching, modeling lessons and through professional development. Staff actively support each other in building professional capacity.

Data is used well by the principal, assistant principal and coaches to discuss student progress. Professional development decisions are based upon these meetings, following observation and when new initiatives are implemented. For example, the new English language arts program was introduced with a comprehensive, whole staff, professional development plan that is continuing. The effectiveness of this program is monitored through the use of interim data and staff feedback.

The school runs smoothly, is very well maintained and is well ordered. The quality of work on display in the classrooms and corridors is attractive and celebrates success. For example, the whole school has a 'book of the month' and displays on this theme are a feature of the school.

Good use is made of outside agencies to support programs and learning during the school day and beyond with daily sessions from the YMCA. Although some enrichment activity takes place, for example national chorale and ballroom dancing, the school needs to identify ways to develop this further.

**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 principal has very clear priorities for the school and is resolute in driving up improvement while maintaining flexibility and adapting her plans if necessary. She works well with the cabinet, coaches and other teams to identify areas for improvement, to plan for the future and to monitor progress through data collation, lesson observation and feedback. However, the underlying reasons for change and the success of initiatives need to be explained to staff more clearly.

The Comprehensive Education Plan contains clear, data-driven, goals that are effectively translated into action plans. The school needs to further develop action planning to incorporate the use of data to set interim goals so that progress can be monitored regularly and quantifiably. Short and medium term timescales are not yet specifically identified in developmental planning.

Good data is generated in the school to evaluate student progress and to adapt instruction, particularly for students in greatest need of improvement. Grade progress is monitored and tracked well. Data is available to identify differences between classes but is not fully utilized. Clear targets for individual and group progress need to be identified more carefully and monitored more rigorously.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Kissena School (PS 201)</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>			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	