



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Clearview Gardens School

Public School 209

**16-10 Utopia Parkway
Queens
NY 11357**

Principal: Dr. Mary E. McDonnell

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Reviewer: Joan L. Johnston

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Clearview Gardens School, Public School 209, is located in Queens and has 593 students enrolled in grades kindergarten through 6. The student cultural mix includes 48% White, 40% Asian, 9% Hispanic, 2% Black and 1% American Indian. Just over 8% are special education students and 7% are English language learners. Their dominant language is Korean. The school is not Title I eligible and is classified as a low needs school.

The school also houses one half of the region's gifted students who are instructed in self-contained classrooms in each of grades 1 through 6. Also located in the school is Public School 9 which is a small special education program for about 75 students. Some of these students participate in the inclusion and co-teaching programs at Public School 209.

Attendance is 95.8% which is higher than the average for similar schools and City-wide schools.

Next year the school will change to a kindergarten through grade 5 configuration and both grades 5 and 6 will exit the building in June.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is an instructional leader who wants her school to thrive and excel, is a major asset to the school community and leads by example.
- There is a clear focus upon student learning and achievement and this guides all instructional decisions.
- A sense of teamwork permeates the school and a collaborative planning process is in place.
- The school has established a strong partnership with parents and a model parent outreach program has been implemented by the parent coordinator.
- Special education students receive focused attention and support services are coordinated to assist students and families.
- The instructional leadership team has put structures and processes in place to evaluate and monitor classroom instruction and student progress.
- Student assessment data is used to improve instruction and to support student learning.
- The comprehensive instructional program is designed to meet the needs of all students, including special education students and those who are gifted.

What the school needs to improve

- Implement a school-wide data reporting system that tracks individual student performance over time and provide access to this for all faculty members.
- Provide classroom teachers with data analysis reports from State tests to assist them in curriculum alignment and with targeting areas in need of improvement for example, item analysis reports or performance of sub-group reports.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the extended day program for academic intervention services as it nears the completion of its first full year of implementation.
- Review the student schedule and the programs offered in order to determine if resources are available to support a more comprehensive art program and additional time for physical education classes.
- Provide professional development to more effectively utilize curriculum mapping software that facilitates curricular alignment initiatives and monitors the pacing of instruction.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

Clearview Gardens School 209 is a good place to be. The principal provides good leadership and knows the name of every student. The school has a strong academic focus. There is effective teamwork and a strong partnership with parents. Faculty and students enjoy coming to school, care about each other, and feel supported in their work. The efforts of the staff all are focused on student learning and professional development that will improve teaching. Teachers have many opportunities to enhance their content knowledge and extend their repertoire of skills.

The school uses its budget to enrich the basic program with music and computer instruction and to provide additional services to special education students. Additional regional programs at the school, such as the gifted and talented classes and the special education classes, also enrich the school in different ways. The administration has identified a need to use technology more effectively in its analysis of data. The school has a strong capacity for continuous 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.

The staff use available data to monitor student performance and achievement carefully in a variety of ways. For example, teachers in kindergarten through grade 2 administer the Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System and review interim assessment reports for their students with the school coaches. In addition, classroom teachers conduct reading assessments, and one-on-one conferencing enables them to dialogue with students in order to evaluate what they understand, know and can do.

The instructional team meets regularly to review progress at each grade level and to implement strategies that address students' learning needs. The team uses results of assessment data to set instructional goals. For example, a focus on writing rubrics and the use of graphic organizers is underway. Administrators use weekly classroom walk-throughs to assess implementation.

While student performance data is now used more comprehensively at whole-school, classroom and individual student level, the school does not yet have an accessible school-wide system that provides reporting data in a timely manner and tracks individual student performance over time. There is an emerging awareness of the need to generate interim data reports utilizing technology. This is in order to ensure that teachers are better supported in aligning the curriculum and instruction with targeted areas for improvement which emerge from the data.

Since the school has both a gifted program and special education classes in the school, the progress of these sub-groups is monitored regularly. Students with special educational needs receive focused attention and support services are coordinated to support students and families. The school's collection and use of data in order to keep a close eye on the achievements of different ethnic groups and English language learners is proficient overall. The school makes sufficient use of data from similar schools to enable further comparisons with its own performance.

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 has well-established structures for planning and goal-setting at all levels. These include the school leadership team, the principal's cabinet, the instructional team, grade level conferences, and parent teacher association meetings. There is a strong sense of cohesiveness and spirit of collaboration on the part of the faculty, staff, and parents. It is clear they are there for the students.

The administrative staff and coaches use the results of assessment data to set goals for the school. The mathematics and literacy coaches then work with classroom teachers to implement these identified goals. For example, a plan to develop the listening skills of students was discussed and strategies brainstormed at a recent instructional team meeting. Valuable professional development which provides guidance and support takes place on a regular basis through grade level conferences, common preparation periods and full day events.

With 90% or more of the students currently achieving at levels 3 and 4 in English language arts and mathematics, the school is able to carefully tailor and monitor academic intervention services to improve the progress and performance of the relatively small population of students who do not meet the standards. The extended day element of the academic intervention program is nearing its first year of completion. There is an awareness that a full evaluation of the effectiveness of what is provided for students most in need of intervention is now timely.

Parents are actively supportive of the school. There are parent involvement activities that engage parents throughout the year and a strong cohort of parent volunteers serve as learning leaders to assist students who need extra attention. The parent coordinator has set up many initiatives that assure the individual needs of students and their families are met. For example, language translation is provided for parent conferences. Most parents attend the parent-teacher conferences. The school is aware that parents are concerned about the planned changes in the school's enrollment pattern next year and has parent programs in place to address these issues.

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 comprehensive instructional and curricular program is designed to meet the needs of students at all levels. The balanced literacy program and the Everyday Mathematics curriculum are well supported by instructional coaches who work to assure alignment across classrooms at each grade level to provide well for the full range of students from special education to gifted. The English language arts program is undergoing development to enable a tighter focus on specific skills where performance is below expectations.

The school also offers computer classes for all grades funded out of the building budget. The computer teacher aligns his instruction with the program at each grade. For example, a group of sixth grade students working on an ancient civilization project incorporated research, writing, and video clips into a PowerPoint presentation. The music program is also supported by the local budget and includes instrumental lessons, a band and a choral program. These programs actively engage the students.

Overall, decisions about staffing, scheduling and the use of the budget are well made to support the school’s priorities. The principal has used her budget to support a full time guidance counselor in order to support students both academically and socially. Scheduling decisions are made by the building administrators that also respond to the requirements of the programs for special education and gifted and talented students. There are also extra programs available, such as basketball and cheerleading teams. The school is now eager to consider whether resourcing and scheduling can support the development of a more comprehensive arts program and additional time for physical education classes.

Students like their classes and teachers and know that extra help is available to them in after-school and extended day programs. They are confident that they can turn to adults for help in other aspects of their lives if they need to. Students behave well. They say that the teachers make learning fun and are always there to help them. Both teachers and students attest to this being a happy school. They enjoy “getting into topics” in greater depth in classes as they progress in school. “It’s a happy school” and “a cool place to be” sum up teacher and student feelings. The school uses a well-developed range of strategies to maintain its focus upon high attendance.

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 principal selects teachers who want to learn and are enthusiastic and this is the focus of the selection procedures used for new appointments. Having selected teachers who are learners themselves, the principal and assistant provide an array of professional development programs geared to the goals identified in the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan and rooted in the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. This year, teachers are focused on developing writing rubrics. Follow-up discussion on

implementation takes place at team meetings and continues at grade level meetings/conferences and there is a strong sense of collaboration and team work within the school. The administrators use formal classroom observations and walkthroughs in a focused and effective way to assess the level of implementation and success.

Parents, teachers, students and staff respect and admire their principal who cares about them, is knowledgeable about instruction, and is highly visible as a leader. All groups affirm that the school runs smoothly, and this is particularly evident at student arrival and dismissal times.

The school works well with its partners to enrich what it is able to provide for the students in its care. For example, parents are trained as learning leaders to provide tutoring and support for students in core areas and the school houses an after- school program in partnership with the YMCA. Other support staff within the school are a strong and effective part of the school's work. The parent co-ordinator, for example, works effectively with parents to respond to the needs of a diverse community, to secure grants and to develop additional partnerships with outside agencies.

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 annual Comprehensive Educational Plan contains goals which are appropriately reviewed, but the plan does not always include clear interim goals or check-up points to enable the accurate ongoing measurement progress throughout the year.

Comparisons of performance are used regularly and well by the instructional team in order to revise, review and create instructional plans which are designed to accelerate student progress and further raise achievement.

The principal is planning to have a more effective computer-based data system and to provide the professional development needed to make it effective. She, too, indicated a desire for additional training in this area. Teachers indicate it would be helpful to have a better picture of performance because at this point they say that they, "don't know the effect of our interventions".

The extended day program is recognized as an area which now needs full evaluation as it nears the end of its first year. This is to ensure that it is meeting student needs and to allow for amendments and adaptations that will further improve its effectiveness.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Clearview Gardens School (PS 209)	∅	✓	+
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	