



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Paul Klapper School

Public School / Middle School 219

**144 - 139 Gravett Road
Queens
NY 11367**

Principal: Meredith Deckler

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Reviewer: David Tobin

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Paul Klapper School is a pre-kindergarten through grade 8 school located in Flushing, Queens. The school serves a population of 620 students. Thirty six percent of the student population are special education students which is a high proportion. English language learners account for 8.7%. Nearly 22% of students are White, another 22% are Black, 24% are Hispanic and 32 % are Asian or from other ethnic heritages.

Annual attendance is 92.3% which close to the average of similar and City-wide schools. PS/MS219 is not a zoned school and, as a result, significant numbers of students live outside the school's catchment area district and are bused daily to school. The school is Title 1 eligible.

The teacher profile is atypical of similar schools in that teachers' length of service in the school is longer, their overall experience of teaching more extensive, and a higher percentage possess Masters degrees or higher. The school's unique structural design offers an open atmosphere conducive to shared learning experiences and inquiry-based instruction.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides highly effective leadership and successfully shares her vision of a school where there is mutual respect, enjoyment in learning and high achievement.
- The impressive relationships developed with parents ensure that the school is held in high regard.
- Quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed thoroughly and used regularly to inform and fine tune instruction.
- The Comprehensive Educational Plan includes a detailed action plan with measurable indicators of success.
- The professional development plan aligns closely with the school's priorities and is formulated on the basis of an analysis of data and feedback from staff.
- The work of academic intervention services and the pupil personnel committee makes a particularly valuable contribution to the early identification and subsequent support of students with a range of complex needs.
- The rigor with which members of staff are selected has contributed significantly to the delivery of a rich and stimulating curriculum.
- Teachers of English language learners and special educational students work closely with other colleagues to ensure a close match between curriculum content and the needs of individual students.
- The outstanding support that staff give each other contributes to the high quality of teaching in evidence throughout the school.
- Data on student performance is used well in decision-making at all levels

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to investigate the reasons for the modest performance of some groups of students and find ways of accelerating progress.
- Building on the best practice, continue to encourage greater consistency by teachers in recording pupils' progress.
- Further extend the use of technology in the classroom.
- Ensure emphasis is placed on standards-based assessment in marking and that students understand how they can achieve the next level.
- Evaluate the impact of professional development and the work of the academic intervention services and the pupil progress committee on students' learning.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

Paul Klapper offers its students a broad, balanced curriculum designed to address the needs of its students in a safe, secure and nurturing environment. Younger students are provided with an excellent start to their education, while older students are not only encouraged to pursue high academic standards they also are taught to be respectful of diversity, to have high self-esteem and to enjoy learning. Staff, parents and students are a community of active learners with all members respected, responsible and accountable.

Members of staff know their students very well through formative assessment and careful observation in the classroom and the wider environment of the school. At all levels, data is used effectively in planning programs for individual students and small groups or in planning improvement across grades. The teamwork that exists between teachers and other professionals is exemplary and ensures that vulnerable students, often exhibiting challenging behaviors, are given the degree of support that enables them to participate fully in the life of the school.

Life within and beyond the classroom is an enriching experience for students, whether it is within the newly-formed dance class, in classes where recently acquired stimulating resources in technology are available, in the large sports hall where music promotes keep-fit activities or in the kindergarten where story-telling and children's talk are valued and encouraged.

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 principal has been proactive in promoting a rigorous institutional review of the school's performance. All staff members are involved in an analysis of State and City test results. This on-going review has helped to raise awareness that the school has outperformed similar schools and that in English language arts and mathematics the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard has been comparable to that of City-wide schools. The school is not complacent and data is analyzed carefully in an effort to secure year-on-year improvement. A recent dip in the performance of students in grades 6 and 7 resulted in a thorough review of curriculum and teaching strategies. To this end, the school has introduced Sunrise Semester programs enabling students to gain greater familiarity with the new test instruments.

In 2005, while male and female students fared equally well in terms of the numbers exceeding the standard in mathematics, the percentage of male students achieving this grade was significantly higher in science but lower in English language arts. This result may not be significant when seen in context a wider but it does emphasize the need to

continue to investigate the reasons for the modest performance of some groups of students in certain content areas and find ways of securing their future progress.

Comprehensive arrangements are in place to identify students considered to be at risk, including special education students and English language learners. Running records, conference notes, informal and formal assessments and teacher observations all contribute to an understanding of how best to promote the progress of these students. In addition, the academic intervention service and the pupil personnel team make valuable contributions to decisions of how best a student's academic, personal and emotional needs can best be identified and met.

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.

Quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed thoroughly and used to inform and fine tune decisions about instruction. The introduction of common planning time has done much to develop teachers' expertise in matching instruction to the individual needs of students particularly when generalist teachers and special education teachers work together in planning and delivering lessons. The introduction of 'push-in' and 'pull-out' sessions has also promoted a climate of collaboration in which teachers learn from each other about how best to make use of peer and self assessment; effective questioning and feedback that focuses on how to improve. These initiatives have contributed to a sharper and more rigorous approach to planning next learning steps. This has been particularly beneficial for those students most in need of improvement.

Teachers regularly use the results of assessment to help them to plan and set learning goals for individual students. Invariably, teachers maintain detailed records of each student's progress with the best examples highlighting the topics covered, any difficulties encountered and a sample of student work to illustrate performance levels. The principal is aware that this good practice is not consistent across grades or classes.

The analysis of students' performance in the Princeton Review Interim Assessment has led to several important developments. Students can now go online, practice their skills, receive immediate feedback and set new targets for themselves. Parents can scrutinize their child's performance and progress over time. Parents appreciate the school's readiness to share information and communicate its high expectations. significant feature

The literacy and mathematics coaches have undertaken valuable analysis of the Princeton results by grade in order to identify where to identify precisely where professional development is needed to enhance teachers' skills and pedagogical knowledge. They have also pinpointed which grades are weakest, which areas should be re-visited; and which groups of students require additional intervention in order to consolidate their understanding of specific concepts.

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 achieved a well-balanced curriculum that provides a strong focus on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. In addition, it provides good opportunities for science, social studies, visual arts, physical education and technology. The principal acknowledges the need to extend further the use of technology in classrooms.

Teachers make good use of performance data to assess students’ progress and to revise goals and plans. The marking policy does not place enough emphasis on standards-based assessment to enable teachers to differentiate instruction regularly for students of different abilities and students to understand how they can achieve the next level.

A range of extracurricular activities supports the mandated curriculum and enriches the students’ school experience. Students are enthusiastic learners, well motivated and speak highly of the support they receive from school staff. They are very aware that the school’s determined efforts to continue improve school attendance will involve a telephone call to parents in the event of absence or tardiness. Teachers know their students well and liaise closely with a team of colleagues who provide guidance and support to students experiencing learning, behavior or emotional difficulties. Parents appreciate the school’s approach to promoting academic achievement and the way in which guidance and pastoral support is provided for their children..

The teachers’ analysis of data influences the content of instruction. For example, members of the cabinet, in reviewing the latest English language arts test results, sought the advice and recommendations of the literacy coach about how best to improve students’ writing skills. Staffing decisions were taken to enable staff to attend in-house workshops about how scaffolding might be used to extend and improve students’ writing. Budgetary decisions were made regarding the purchase of software to support this drive for improvement. In the recent past the cabinet has made similar decisions to ensure that resources are used efficiently and teachers are assigned effectively. 60% of books in classroom libraries are now color-coded to identify readability levels and a commercial reading scheme was purchased for the kindergarten based on first-hand knowledge of its relevance to the school.

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

There have been few appointments in the last two years. Nevertheless, selection criteria are rigorous and seek to confirm commitment to the school’s vision and values. In addition to a formal interview, candidates are required to give demonstration lessons and meet with teachers within a faculty prior to interview. A recently appointed teacher in mathematics has volunteered to learn ballroom dancing in order to develop dance as a recent school initiative that is growing in popularity.

The smooth and efficient running of the school is due, in no small measure, to the high standards set by the principal. She is well respected by staff, students and parents and

has been singularly effective in communicating her vision for the school's development. The principal spends time in classrooms, formally and informally observing staff and talking to students about their learning. As a result, she is well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development. A culture of mutual support has developed in which all members of staff work collaboratively, pooling their expertise to provide effective learning opportunities for all students.

Professional development aligns closely with the school's priorities and takes good account of analysis of data and feedback from staff. The support that staff provide for each other is outstanding and contributes to the high quality of instruction in evidence throughout the school. Teachers of English language learners and special educational students work closely with general colleagues in ensuring a close match between curriculum content and the needs of individual students. Although teachers engage in honest evaluation, the school has not yet established formal procedures for evaluating the impact of different professional development activities on student outcomes to ensure that the best possible use is made of resources.

The school has developed a range of effective partnership with community organization and institutions for the benefit of both students and staff.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school is committed to continuous improvement and has introduced a rigorous system to monitor students' progress and evaluate the impact of instruction on students' learning. The school leadership team has drawn effectively upon data to develop the Comprehensive Education Plan, setting school-wide priorities, grade specific priorities, goals and objectives. Not only does the plan provide an accurate overview of educational programs, it also offers a detailed action plan for the current academic year, setting precise success criteria against which it can be judged.

In addition to identifying the need for an increase in the percentage of students meeting the standard on State and City tests, the plan addresses how best the instruction of special education students and English language learners can be strengthened. Already special educators liaise with general educators to provide information about strategies and techniques designed to accelerate learning ; wherever possible 'push-in' sessions are used to obviate the need for special education referrals; students read 'just right' books matched to their level of proficiency; and the pre-kindergarten program has been re-structured to offer two full-day classes.

Throughout the academic year, assessment information is gathered to review and revise school and faculty plans and realign practices. Recent analysis of test results has resulted in the introduction of the Sunrise Semester, the Test Preparation Academy and the extension of the Princeton Review as an online diagnostic tool available to parents and students at home.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Paul Klapper School [PS/MS 219]	∅	✓	+
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