



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Seaside School

Public School 225

**190 Beach 110 Street
Queens
NY 11694**

Principal: Matthew P. Melchiorre

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Reviewer: Alan Geller

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Seaside School, Public School 225, located in the Rockaway Park section of Queens is a pre-kindergarten to grade 8 school that serves 675 students. The student population comprises of 45% from Black backgrounds, 34% Hispanic, 17% White, 4% Asian and other backgrounds. The school has Title 1 status with an 88% eligibility level, which is about the same as similar schools and higher than City schools. There are 11% of students receiving special education service in self-contained and collaborative team teaching classes. There are 10% English language learners who receive a pull-out mode of instruction. Attendance is 89% which has remained the same for some years and is below City and similar school averages

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and the assistant principals provide focused leadership creating a positive learning environment.
- Teachers have high expectation for their students and are committed to providing each child with the necessary skills to achieve well.
- The tracking of data to analyze performance and progress of students is developing well.
- School wide committees such as the pupil personnel team collaborate successfully to ensure a quality educational program.
- Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are appropriately based upon the data and properly aligned to meet the needs of the students.
- Procedures and school routines are developing well, resulting in a calm and orderly school.
- The workshop model is utilized effectively to meet the individual needs of students and is creating engaged learners.
- The parents are pleased with the high expectations that the school has for its students and respect the work of the principal.
- Successful early intervention programs have helped to reduce the number of students in greatest need.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the teachers' skills in tracking and monitoring performance data to note the mastery of skills in relation to student progress and to plan their next learning steps.
- Further develop specific feedback to students, including conferencing, so that they know more exactly what they have to do to improve their work.
- Further systematize the monitoring and assessment of school plans and interventions to ensure their improved effectiveness.
- Continue to provide opportunities for teachers to observe each other and to participate in self- and peer-evaluation activities.
- Continue to develop professional development activities for staff to further differentiate instruction for all students.
- Seek to develop a relationship with a community based organization that will work with students to provide additional academic support.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school was restructured two years ago and the principal was able to select new staff while also keeping many teachers who previously worked at the school. The restructuring had a positive impact on the overall tone of the building and helped to establish the generally calm and orderly atmosphere that prevails throughout the school. The principal and his team are properly focused on improving the instructional program. They recognize that they have to develop the use of data as a tool to improve instruction and although they have started this work, they understand the system is not yet consistent enough to be effective. The teachers generally respect the students and make good use of the workshop model as a means to provide more small group and one-on-one support for the students. The principal introduced the 'Reading First Program' that has an improved system of tracking student progress and is proving a better fit for the students and the teachers. Although these tools are useful, there are still inconsistencies in the tracking and monitoring of student performance across the school.

Teachers' professional development arises from an analysis of the school's data which details where the strengths and weaknesses are. From this work, the principal recognizes that there is still a need to improve teachers' ability to analyze data, as well as to enable them to improve the differentiation of their instruction. Nevertheless, the school has been successful in reducing the number of students in greatest need. A further benefit of the school's data analysis is that it effectively allows it to determine how to use the budgeting, scheduling and staffing to improve students outcomes. Parents are pleased with the principal, value his leadership and now participate on the school leadership team.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school collects and analyzes data in reading, writing and mathematics as a means of tracking student progress, but as yet, this is not done consistently across the school. A new program for kindergarten to grade 3, 'Reading First', has a built in tracking system which records the progress of individual students, classes and grades. The school has used this program to plan targeted interventions and establish more flexible groups for instruction. This is beginning to improve students' learning, but this process is not consistently applied across the whole school. The principal analyzes the trends in State scores and shares this information with the school leaders, coaches and academic intervention team who then pass this information on to the teachers. The school leaders further analyze the English language arts and mathematics regional practice tests by creating an item analysis of skill development. This has allowed the school to determine where it is effective in making the best progress and where there are still weaknesses. As a result, students with specific needs are beginning to get these needs more accurately identified and met. Standardized test scores are further analyzed to note trends and skill needs and are also used to support teacher training.

The needs of the different subgroups of English language learners and special education students are now carefully diagnosed; this results in specific class and intervention programs. The school is aware of a disparity in the scores of Black boys and girls and is focused on planning programs to address their' needs. The school has not yet succeeded in improving the number of students who achieve the higher levels in English language arts and this is now a priority in terms of intervention and curriculum plans. Although it has successfully reduced the numbers of students at the lowest levels due to the successful early intervention strategies.

Good use of the workshop model allows students to be evaluated in guided reading. This is effective in helping to determine small group and one-on-one instruction. Although the use of data is developing in each classroom, it is not yet sufficiently detailed to meet the needs of every student. The principal makes worthwhile comparisons between the school and other similar schools to determine where there are areas of excellence that can be studied and adopted. The school leaders have started to analyze the progress of students over time which enables them to note yearly improvement.

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.

The principal initially sets the school goals in collaboration with the assistant principal and coaches. Specific groups of staff are also involved depending upon their teaching assignments. The principal has made a good start in sharing the data with the faculty so as to establish improvement plans which have a greater impact. One example of the success of this process is the introduction of the workshop model. This was introduced to facilitate a teaching style that is more child centered and gives more consistent individualized support across the school. A further example is the new reading program which allows the school to set long-range goals that are monitored frequently to judge the ongoing improvement of students. All goals for individuals are based upon the premise that where possible, students should move to a higher level. Samples of challenging student work are in evidence on bulletin boards and in each classroom which are accompanied by teacher feedback.

The staff has high expectations for their students. Evidence for this can be seen in the student work samples. In order to further ensure student success, support personnel focus on the students in greatest need in the classes of the least experienced teachers as a way to support both the students and the teachers at the same time. Additionally, specific staff have been employed to work with students in greatest need. This is either through push-in or pull-out modes of instruction. Parents are sometimes involved in providing information to teachers, but this is not consistently the case. However, a number of parents do have an input as a part of the school leadership team. The pupil personnel team exemplifies effective support for staff. They work with the teachers to address students in greatest need and to drive the activity of all members of the school community.

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

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school follows the mandated curriculum in literacy for grades 4 through 8 and mathematics, and the regional plan for writing. Each of the programs has tools that provide indicators of student progress. Interim assessments in reading and mathematics have allowed the school to develop an item analysis which is used to track individual needs and then to plan next learning steps. Time schedules have been established to guarantee that each curriculum area is fully developed within a specified time so that all subject areas are covered by the developments. The English language arts and mathematics curricula are supplemented by intervention programs that serve to improve student progress. Some staff differentiate instruction and there is some monitoring of this process, but this is not consistent across the school. Teachers are now starting to learn how to group students based upon their specific needs in the literacy and mathematics, but as this is only just beginning it has not taken hold yet.

Teachers provide feedback to students to help them to improve their writing skills. However, the commentary needs to be more specific for students to know exactly what they need to do to improve. Common planning time is used as a means to review data in order to plan more engaging lessons. The time is also used to identify strategies that will help the students to learn more. All the school data is monitored by the school leaders and discussed as a means to plan budgeting, scheduling and make staffing decisions. Particular teachers have been given specific assignments and this has created a better focus for the teachers who have had more success in increasing student achievement. The process has ensured that teachers know the students and support the programs and has led to improved outcomes. In most cases the instructional program has proved engaging for students, but it has been less effective at middle school level where the staff need more time and support to develop their skills.

Attendance is carefully monitored by the principal and his team with absences followed up by notifying families or on occasion visiting them. Most staff treat students respectfully and this is usually reciprocated. Most students feel they can trust an adult yet some are more cautious. Student behavior is improving, but the principal is aware that more academic and social programs are still needed to address the needs of the adolescent middle school students.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has deliberately appointed a large number of inexperienced staff in the last two years. They have been chosen because of their willingness to work collaboratively with a focus on using data to improve instruction, and because of their desire to work with the middle school students. This high risk strategy has nevertheless proved effective. It has helped to improve school tone and ensured that students are learning more effectively. The newly selected staff eagerly endorse the vision of the school and do work together as an effective part of the team. The school’s professional development plan is rigorously based upon the needs of the students and the staff and focuses on the school’s most

urgent needs. As a result of the plan, teachers working in the Reading First program were trained before the start of year and a consultant provided follow up support throughout the year. This has proven to be helpful in allowing these staff to implement the plan well. The program has a more structured approach than was previously in place and although the data is not conclusive, initial progress is positive. When the implementation of the program was monitored, one class was identified as doing poorly. This led to an in depth analysis, and it was found that students were falling behind because the program was not implemented properly. Consequently, the school team provided the necessary training and a more positive result was observed. More professional development has been provided on the use of data and differentiating instruction, but this is only just beginning and has not taken hold at this time.

Teachers discuss the implication of their data analysis during their common planning time and at individual meetings with the principal. The principal is frequently seen around the building talking with students and encouraging them in a positive manner to do well. Teachers are encouraged to observe each other and the principal is aware that a more formal plan for teachers to observe each other and to participate in peer and other self-evaluation activities needs to be developed. The principal and the assistant principals know their staff and provide them with constructive feedback that serves to improve their teaching skills. The principal is respected and is viewed as a person who listens to the needs of the students and the staff and they support his efforts. This has resulted in a generally calm and orderly school. At present, the school does not have a partnership with an outside agency, but is aware of the value of such a program.

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 established clear plans and set challenging goals for the school. The Comprehensive Educational Plan is used as a tool by the school leaders to determine how well the goals are being achieved. The school leaders observe classes, interact with staff and listen to the concerns of the teachers, students and parents to determine the effectiveness of the school plans. Assistant principals and coaches are fully involved in checking progress and sharing their observations with the principal as a means to monitor the effectiveness of the developments in the school. The principal often follows up with the staff to discuss the implementation of specific strategies to improve the program and then monitors to check that it was done correctly. However, this is not done consistently enough across the school to ensure that all interventions strategies are working well.

The school reviews the outcomes of assessments from previous years against the current assessment scores to determine trends in its progress. For example, an assessment was analyzed which then resulted in the school addressing the particular area of weakness through teacher training. Comparisons of progress within and across grades are often conducted and an analysis of the results makes it possible for the school leaders to revise plans on a regular basis. There are sufficient organizational structures within the building to ensure good regular communication between all staff on the aspects that have the greatest impact on the school's development.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Seaside School (PS 225)	∅	✓	+
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	