



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Rosa Parks School

Public School 254

**84 – 40 101 Street
Queens
NY 11418**

Principal : Naomi Drouillard

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Reviewer: Derek Pattinson**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Rosa Park School opened in 2004 as a purpose-built elementary school for students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. It currently has 490 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten to grade 4. The school's diverse and growing population is currently made up of 61% Hispanic, 22% Asian, 9% White and 7% Black students. More than eleven languages are spoken in school. The proportion of English language learners is 15%. This number is growing as more students enter from other countries. The school has around 15% of its students who are referred for special education. It has been in receipt of Title 1 funding since it opened. Attendance rates at around 91% is close to similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is well respected by staff, students and parents and is diving forward innovation and improvement.
- Good systems are in place to measure and check individual student performance.
- The significant emphasis on professional development effectively supports the needs of individual teachers and the school's goals for raising achievement.
- The strong community culture and emphasis on collaboration lead to high expectations of all at the school who are committed to continuous improvement and high standards.
- The wide range of assessment data is used well to inform curriculum development, identify students in need of extra support and to align instruction to the needs of students most of the time.
- Positive relationships underpin the school's work and as a result, students enjoy coming to school, feel cared-for, well supported and are confident about asking for help.
- The celebration of cultural diversity, which is especially appreciated by very supportive parents, is a strong feature of school life.
- Effective programs are in place to raise the performance of special education students and English Language Learners.
- Grade and faculty conferences and other meetings are powerful tools for analyzing data to modify the curriculum and align instruction.
- Classroom environments, including a well-stocked library, celebrate students' work and promote learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Use data more effectively to ensure that teachers, on a day-to-day basis, align instruction to the needs of all students to accelerate their learning.
- Devise, implement and regularly review strategies and approaches to involve students more in their own learning, such as through a greater use of self and peer assessment.
- As the school population grows, use the full range of rubrics to measure performance and progress, including comparisons with similar schools and between ethnic groups.
- Ensure that the Comprehensive Education Plan focuses on key priorities for development, and that progress towards their achievement are rigorously and regularly tracked.
- Give all students short-term goals and ensure that they know and understand what they are, to help them reach the next small step in their learning.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with some well-developed features.

The Rosa Parks School is dedicated to the academic success of each and every student. The principal is well respected by staff, students and parents and is driving forward innovation and improvement in this relatively new school. All staff are valued, show high levels of commitment and demonstrate effort and expertise. As a result, a safe, orderly and nurturing environment is established, which enables all students to enhance their unique talents and individual attributes. This 'grow and glow' culture, referred to often by the principal, lies at the heart of the school's work. 'Even if you are little, you can always make a difference' one small child confidently stated.

Teachers work hard and mostly successfully to ensure that instruction is matched to students' needs. They increasingly plan and set goals for their students to help accelerate learning, although students are not always familiar with them. They place considerable emphasis on enhancing students' self esteem. Data is regularly and rigorously analyzed by the administration and at grade and faculty conferences to ensure that students usually receive appropriately differentiated instruction to help them learn. There is a positive culture of collaboration and teamwork where barriers to learning are seen as challenges to help students achieve well. The students enjoy the challenges provided by the teachers, behave well and have good attitudes to all aspects of their schooling. Students come from a variety of cultural and racial backgrounds, where over eleven languages are spoken, happily work and play together and enjoy coming to school because they know that they are safe, well cared-for and supported. There are clear systems established for monitoring and reviewing the work of the school. However, there is scope for increased rigor and flexibility in its approach to help it become even more successful.

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.

Data-folios and portfolios for each student are an integral part of each classroom. Data contained within the data-folios, including individual conference notes and running reading records, enable the school to establish a clear picture of the overall performance and progress made by students each year. Portfolios add to the quality of information accumulated to enable teachers to obtain a secure picture of what students know and understand. Good systems are established to measure and check individual student performance. Data is effectively evaluated to identify where strengths and weaknesses lie. In addition, the school uses its own data to good effect to measure individual student's progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This ensures that the needs of most students are met. Because teachers use data to understand each student's achievements, they are able to identify what they need to do next. The marking of students' work undertaken by teachers, which acknowledges success, while also sharing

with students what they must do next to improve, reinforces this approach. The progress of students is carefully tracked in reading, with books clearly leveled to ensure that teachers can see at a glance which students are on track to reach or exceed their goals. Teachers create and use rubrics, such as in social science, to effectively assess the level each student has reached.

Test data is analyzed closely in this growing school, increasingly using information technology, to help identify patterns and trends. The school uses data to compare the progress of individual students across classes and grades and to put suitable instructional programs in place. As a result, the school has a very good understanding of the performance and progress of special education students, English language learners and other students whose progress is particularly under review. However, data is not yet always used well enough to ensure that all teachers align instruction to the needs of their students on a day-to-day basis. As yet in this young school, data has revealed that there is little variation in the performance of students from different ethnic groups.

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 administration and teachers meet regularly to set annual goals for each individual student’s performance and to identify the steps needed to reach these goals. The data available in the school is analyzed regularly at grade meetings and faculty conferences. The outcomes of these meetings are shared with parents who welcome the opportunity to be involved in supporting their child’s academic development. Teachers regularly plan, set and review goals for their students. However, students are not always familiar with them. They often do not know what they need to do next to secure the next small step towards success. For example, while there are regular assessments against agreed rubrics, the small steps students need to achieve within each statement are rarely broken down and communicated with them to assist their learning. As a result, students are not yet involved enough in helping to accelerate their own learning.

The regular meetings, detailed systems and frequent conferencing provide good attention to the needs of special education students and English language learners ensuring their progress. The school does not always focus enough on a day-to-day basis on the progress of higher achieving students in order to challenge them to exceed the standard. Parents are knowledgeable about school programs and what is expected of their children and comment very positively about the high levels of collaboration and ‘wonderful family atmosphere’. This full partnership, which includes the implementation of a program of parent workshops, ensures all members of the school community are focused on improving the whole child’s achievements.

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.

There is much collaboration and cooperation between the subject coaches, grade teachers and the subject faculties that is producing curricular plans that have a clear scope and sequence. Coaches are used productively to support teachers who are held accountable for improving their skills for the benefit of their students. As a result, teachers focus on goals, use data to drive instruction, evaluate progress and adjust lessons, as required. Teachers make effective use of the Princeton Review to assess and set activities, which helps individual students to build on their skills.

Special academic programs, such as ‘Voyager’ which promotes early literacy through small group instruction, ensures that work is matched to students’ needs. However, students are not yet involved enough in assessing their own work. Grade level planning is strong so that all students in a particular grade receive similar work. Data is used extensively to ensure that instruction is usually differentiated to student’s needs. Teachers’ knowledge and understanding of differentiation is increasing. Data on English language learners and special education students has enabled the school to put effective interventions in place to address their needs by utilizing the expertise of different professionals to accelerate their learning, sometimes through one-to-one support. For these students there is clear rigor in the process of setting and modifying goals and in the drive to achieve them.

Students are usually engaged and sometimes inspired by the educational programs. As a result, they enjoy their learning, show very positive attitudes, are attentive, are stimulated by the quality of the curriculum and engaging instruction and trust their teachers. The school uses its budget and staffing assignments well to support its goals. For example, there is good staffing support for special education students and English language learners through individualized programs in ‘push-in’ and ‘pull out sessions. Schedules give good emphasis to students’ personal as well as their academic development. Attendance is high priority of the school and any unexplained absence is immediately followed up. Good attendance is celebrated and rewarded.

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 is well respected by staff, students and parents and is driving forward innovation and improvement. She has a clearly defined vision for ensuring that the schools’ programs fit every child’s personal and academic needs and has selected well qualified, energetic and articulate staff who share this vision and are beginning to use data to help align their instruction. She has helped establish a culture in which cultural diversity is celebrated and classroom environments promote learning and celebrate students’ work. Teachers consider the principal is strong, focused, has an ‘open door’ policy and always ‘puts children first’. This is a view shared by parents who feel part of the school and part of their children’s education. The principal and coaches visit classrooms regularly and check instruction is of good quality and that agreed programs are delivered effectively. Feedback

from these visits, both formal and informal, is well received by teachers who value the contact, professional dialogue and guidance offered. The smooth day-to-day running of the school is in no small part down to the work of the principal and newly appointed assistant principal.

The significant emphasis given to professional development through a full and varied professional development program, including study groups and summer workshops, effectively supports the needs of individual teachers and the school's goals for raising achievement. Teachers plan together in teams to review and revise practice in response to student data. Teachers are self-critical and evaluative which contributes to the culture of sustaining improvement to accelerate learning. Good partnerships with support services, such as with Academic Intervention Services, Occupational Therapy and Speech and language services enable special education students and English language learners to make good progress. However, though professional development is high profile, teachers do not give students enough opportunity to evaluate their own and others' work to help them develop greater ownership in their learning.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has a strong, shared culture that is effective in bringing staff together and as a result moving students' learning forward. The annual goals for the school are clearly identified within the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), ensuring that there is a broad understanding of what the expectations for students are and the actions required to achieve them. However, it contains too many targets, with 23 covering science and technology alone, to be an effective steer for the school. While it contains most of what it should, time frames are not always clear or rigorous enough, and plans are not always adjusted during the year to realign them to students' needs to help maximize the drive towards improvement. This is especially important as numbers continue to grow to ensure that future goals identify the students who have the potential to exceed the standard by reaching level 4 to ensure that the push for high achievement is maintained.

There is an extensive meeting structure, including faculty, grade and cabinet meetings, which facilitate the ongoing evaluation of progress towards the goals identified. With the collaboration of teachers, goals for students are revised, changed or discontinued, as required throughout the year, intervention or enrichment programs agreed, and an overall evaluation leads to the next set of goals being compiled. This ensures that each following year build systematically on the previous one. The strong emphasis on teamwork, which is one of the school's clear strengths, ensures that there is regular communication among all involved professionals when meetings take place to discuss progress towards the achievement of the school's and students' goals. As a result, all have ownership in establishing agreed approaches and strategies to ensure that students accelerate their learning.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Rosa Parks School (PS 254)	∅	✓	+
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	