

The Queens College School

The Queens College School

**148 - 20 Reeves Avenue
Queens
NY 11367**

Principal: Anastasia Schneider

Dates of review: May 17 - 19, 2006

Reviewer: Dr. Anna Coyle

The Queens College School

Content Of The Report

Part 1: The School Context

Background information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

What is the school's overall performance

How well does it meet New York City's evaluation criteria

Other key observations

Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

The Queens College School

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

This is a unique school that operates under a Memorandum of Understanding between Queens College and the New York City Department of Education. It enjoys the benefit of a state of the art building on the Queens College Campus. It takes students from all the Queens local districts and serves approximately 345 students. Students come from a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds including Hispanic, Asian, Black and White. Very few lack proficiency in English.

The Queens College School

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students achieve very well. They make good progress and attain high standards in the tests they take.
- Behavior is exemplary. The students are keen to do well and work diligently to do their best.
- The school is a very caring, safe, supportive environment in which all students and staff treat each other with great respect.
- The leadership of the school is outstanding. Highly committed senior staff works collaboratively to ensure that the school provides the best possible education for its students.
- Teaching is scholarly. All teachers have strong subject knowledge which they use very effectively to aid students' learning. This is enriched by the school's very close collaboration with Queen's College.
- Lessons are lively and exciting. Excellent relationships between students and teachers help to ensure that learning is often great fun.
- The school provides a very rich curriculum. There are many links between subjects and Art is used particularly well to connect themes together.
- Excellent displays of students' work adorn the walls of the classrooms, hallways, auditorium and entrance hall. They are of an exceptionally high standard and sing out in celebration of the students' success.
- Parents are closely involved in the education of their children and many take part in school activities.

What the school needs to improve

- Lift the quality of teaching still further by extending best practice across the whole school.
- Continue to enhance the professional development of teachers by helping them to gather, interpret and use data to drive instruction.
- Consider appointing an assistant Principal and an additional Academic Intervention Services teacher.

The Queens College School

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The Principal provides a very clear sense of educational direction that is shared by all stakeholders.

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

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.

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

The school regularly analyzes test data to check how well students are doing. This analysis shows that students do well in all subjects in City and State tests. The results are analyzed by gender to show that female students achieved slightly higher results than males in the latest tests. Results are also analyzed to show the proportion of students gaining given levels by ethnicity for the main groups in school. There is less evidence of standards being analyzed to show the progress made by all the ethnic groups represented within school and this may be something the school could think about developing in order to ensure that there are no pockets of underachievement among ethnic groups of students.

The school uses the analysis of results particularly to identify students who struggle with the work so that extra help can be provided. The results also enable the school to keep parents informed on their children's progress and how they can help their children to achieve even more.

It would be useful for the school to develop systems that were rigorous enough to show how much progress students made from entering the school to ensure that all were achieving as well as possible, even if they did not make the levels expected of their age. This would also enable the school to identify any students who, though gaining good grades, were capable of even more.

Quality Statement 2: 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 with some well developed areas.

A strength of the school is the work of the Academic Intervention Services team. The staff uses assessment data to identify students who find learning hard. They then provide the support they need to improve their learning. However, ongoing assessment of students' achievement is not used rigorously enough to plan differentiated work in classes consistently across the school and in one or two classes seen during the review it was not

The Queens College School

clear how well students at all ability levels were being challenged by the work expected of them. Assessment is a combination of standardized tests, formal tests and informal ongoing teacher assessment. The school could usefully provide support for teachers to develop their expertise in the gathering and use of assessment data to drive instruction. Teachers keep portfolios of students' work and the use of these could be developed so that they help to identify not just what students have done well but also ways in which they could do even better. An element of self and peer assessment would also help students and teachers to identify specific learning needs of different groups or individuals within a given grade or class.

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

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

The school provides students with a rich range of learning experiences. The curriculum is strong not only in mathematics and English language arts but also in the arts as shown by the quality of some of the work on display around the school. A particular strength is the very practical and rich curriculum provided in pre-kindergarten. Here the adults provide a lively and stimulating learning environment that excites the students and makes them want to learn. This is enhanced by the practical nature of the activities provided for them, as in planting beans to illustrate how they need certain factors for healthy growth. This shows a clear understanding of how students of this age learn best and a determination to help them to learn effectively.

Throughout the school the teachers are confident with the subjects they teach. Teaching is scholarly and is enriched by the collaboration with Queens College. Teachers' enthusiasm motivates students so that they want to learn, pay close attention and try hard with their work. Teachers make good links between subjects to make learning more interesting and art is used particularly well to connect themes. Teachers celebrate students' successes through excellent displays of their work in classrooms and around the school.

Because the teachers have such a good rapport with students and the school promotes an excellent culture of mutual respect students have very positive attitudes towards the school. This leads to behavior being exemplary and to students being diligent in all they tackle with a determination to do their best.

Teachers have provided a very text rich culture where students are surrounded by 'word walls', and displays of their work as authors. This emphasis helps to stimulate students' interest in developing and extending their growing literacy skills and explains in part their outstandingly positive attitudes to learning.

Although most of the teaching in the school is good there are occasional classes where it is not quite of the same high standard and the school could usefully disseminate the best practice in instructional techniques to further develop the skills across the school.

The Queens College School

Quality Statement 4: 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.

This is a reflective school where staff is committed to continuous improvement. The links established with Queens College play an important role in this through helping with teachers' professional development. The school had a professional development committee with Queens College to identify needs and how to meet them but this folded because of pressure of time and other pressing priorities. However, the establishment of this committee demonstrated the leadership's commitment to professional development, consideration is now being given to ways of re-instating this through creative scheduling.

The school is led by an excellent Principal. She has established a very clear vision that is shared by all staff and students and other stakeholders. Supported by highly committed staff members she has established a culture in which the staff works collaboratively to ensure that the school provides the best education it can for its students.

The Comprehensive Education Plan illustrates the school's commitment to continuous improvement. It identifies key priorities and highlights very clear measurable targets and how these will be achieved. The plan is monitored on a regular basis to check that the school is on target to achieve its goals for the year.

The parents of students are highly involved in the life of the school. A school survey showed that most are very happy with the work the school is doing with their children. When the school runs parent workshops the response is very good, illustrating their positive support for the school.

The school has identified clear staffing needs that it is working to overcome so that they do not become a barrier to learning for students. These needs include an Academic Intervention Services teacher, an assistant Principal to help with management of the school and another school aide.

Staff, students and parents do appreciate the state of the art buildings and the good level of resources that includes a set of laptop computers for students to use and wireless internet access.

Quality Statement 5: 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 has a variety of ways of checking how well students are doing. The main strength is in the area of identifying and supporting students who need extra help. The analysis of test results is used well to identify those students who are not performing to the standard expected and to highlight where extra support is needed. The school could usefully develop the skills of the teachers in the analysis and interpretation of data to help them to refine further their planning for different ability groups within classes and thereby

The Queens College School

accelerate learning.

It would also be useful for the school to consider how to develop rigorous ways of assessing students' attainment on entry to the school and tracking their progress throughout each year. In this way the school would have a stronger grasp on how well individuals and groups of students were achieving, whether they exceeded the expected levels in formal tests or whether they did not reach those levels.

The school's regular reviews of its progress towards the targets in its Comprehensive Educational Plan typify its culture of reflecting on its performance and how it could be improved.

Other key observations

This is a good school that benefits from its close links with Queens College and other organizations including the Lincoln Center and the Queens Botanical Gardens where students' work is on display, and the New Victory Theater. Among its strengths is the focus on developing the arts and using art to connect subjects and themes being taught across the school. This is a school committed to continuous improvement and well placed to get even better in the future because of the leadership of the Principal and the commitment of the staff.

The Queens College School

Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.	o	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English Language Arts, mathematics, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are "objective" when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards-based, • consistent across students, • capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice, <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the performance of different students to be compared, and • learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified. 			X
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>		X	
<p>1.3 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, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>			X
Quality Statement 2: 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.	o	✓	+
<p>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 it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>		X	
<p>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 warranting attention.</p>		X	
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>			X
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>			X
<p>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.</p>			X

The Queens College School

Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	0	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.			X
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.			X
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. 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
3.6 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
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X

Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	0	✓	+
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 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 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.			X

The Queens College School

Quality Statement 5: 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.	o	✓	+
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 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 interim 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 each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.			X