



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Carteret School

Public School 026

**4108 Victory Boulevard
Staten Island
NY 10314**

Principal: Ms J Mecane

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Reviewer: Martyn Groucutt

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Carteret School is a comparatively small elementary school for students from kindergarten through grade 5 with 200 enrolled students. It is situated in the town of Travis, Staten Island. The student population is 60% White, 27% Hispanic, 8% Asian and 4.5% Black. Attendance is very good, standing at 94.7% for this term, above the City average and that of similar schools. Of the total student number, 6.5% are English language learners who qualify for additional support and 16% are special education students. The school is Title 1 eligible although the percentage of eligible students is lower than the average for similar and City-wide schools.

There is comparatively little social mobility in the local community and many of the parents and grandparents of the current students attended the school. The two buildings that make up the school date from 1896 and 1903.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has successfully developed the workshop model for classroom instruction, moving away from a more traditional teacher dominated format.
- The promotion of individualized learning encourages a focus on the needs of students.
- The maintenance of data folders for every student gives teachers an immediate overview of progress made.
- The effective use of consultants and coaches has supported improvements in teaching and learning.
- Academic intervention services and the pupil personnel team provide effective support for those students most at risk.
- The extended day provides additional learning opportunities for all students to maximize their learning.
- Attendance is good.
- Teachers have annual professional goals that form part of professional development discussions with the principal.
- There is a commitment to the care of the whole child, which is reflected in the employment of a full time guidance counselor.

What the school needs to improve

- Make more effective use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning across the whole curriculum
- Develop further the use of differentiated instruction to meet individual needs.
- Develop a tracking system that shows individual progress from a baseline on entry until a student leaves the school using a common format across the grades.
- Increase the involvement of parents in supporting the life of the school and understanding curriculum developments.
- Bring all teachers to equal effectiveness in using student data to drive up the quality of instruction.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The current principal is now in her fourth year at the school and, during this time, she has developed the use of the workshop model for instruction, with its much greater stress on individualized teaching and learning. The schemes of work used in English language arts and mathematics have been changed to better meet the identified needs of the students. The use of data as a tool for driving instruction has increased dramatically and a good range of formal and informal information provides a picture of individual student progress. A challenge now is to ensure that all teachers are equally adept at using the information they have to maximize the learning of every student that they teach. This includes a number of special education students taught in self-contained classes who are bussed to the school each day, sometimes from a considerable distance.

The two buildings that make up the school date around the end of the 19th century, but their appearance has been updated and lively displays of student work and other material creates a welcoming environment. The students say that they like the school and their teachers, and they value being members of a small school community because of the close personal relationships that are fostered, including those between adults and students within the school.

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.

Since the arrival of the principal four years ago the school has moved away from a didactic, teacher-led approach to one that uses data to drive instruction. Every student in the school has a personal data folder which is maintained by their class teacher and the basis of instruction is becoming increasingly personalized through the development of the workshop model. However, there is a need to ensure that all teachers are comfortable with and support this movement towards data driven instruction.

A range of formal and informal sources of data are used. From kindergarten through grade 3, ECLAS scores are a valuable source of information, while in grades 4 and 5 information from sources such as Princeton Review and Grow Reports are used. However, the monitoring of progress is not fully effective, because the school has yet to develop a system through which the progress of each student can be tracked through the school from an initial baseline, using a consistent approach.

Informal sources of data including conferencing and the maintenance of running records are used effectively. Professional development has supported teachers' ability to develop their expertise, so that they are now effective in logging individual progress throughout the year to give a clear picture of each student in their class.

As well as generating data that reflects the achievement of every student in each classroom and grade, the school also looks at the achievement of some groups of students, though group needs analysis currently lacks the detail of the individual analysis. Ethnic group comparisons are not made and other groups, such as students with special education needs or English language learners, are, on occasion, looked at by academic intervention and pupil personnel staff respectively. However, not enough is done to identify specific groups so that the overall effectiveness of instruction can be better judged.

The school does not make direct comparisons of its performance with that of similar schools – in part because there are few in a similar social, economic and geographical situation.

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

In this small school, there is not the grade level organization or opportunities for close collaboration associated with larger schools, with just a single class for each grade. However, the coaches work well with teachers to create objective and measurable goals for all students which are recorded in their data folders. School-wide planning developed through the support of the external consultants, together with the school’s coaches, provides very good support for the teachers, enabling them to consider effectively next learning steps as the year progresses. However, students themselves might be more aware of their own achievement if there was more of it on display around the school, together with clear rubrics showing why it has been assessed in the way it has.

Goals and plans focus appropriately on whole school development and this is supported by the principal’s collection of samples of students’ work from across the whole school, so that she has a clear picture of progress and continuing needs.

The school gives very good support to students who need additional support. Effective academic intervention services support class teachers in making additional provision available, so reducing the need to refer students on for formal assessment and an individual education plan. Similarly, students considered to be at risk for social or emotional reasons are very well supported by the pupil personnel team, which contains a range of relevant professionals who plan together well. Despite its small size the school employs a full time guidance counselor, reflecting its commitment to the needs of the whole child.

The school makes its expectations and goals clear to parents. Parents are welcomed by the school and say appreciate the contact they have with their children’s teachers and the strength of the dialogue that ensues. A weekly folder that goes home with the students provides an effective vehicle for maintaining a regular dialogue. This enables goals and plans for improving student performance to involve all members of the school community. However, the school still has some way to go in its efforts to involve more parents in the life of the school, for example in the parent workshops that are held regularly.

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 aligns with the mandated curriculum which is based on meeting the needs of its students, through the effective use of data and in developing the workshop model to involve students more actively in their learning. The administration makes good use of data in holding teachers’ accountable for the progress of their students. This is also reflected in staffing and scheduling decisions. Progress towards goals is monitored and there is flexibility in amending planning to meet needs. Portfolios of student work are maintained and passed on with students so that progress is observable. A good example of the acceleration of learning for all is the use of extended day provision in helping maximize individual potential for students achieving at all levels. While there has been a marked move towards the use of group provision, the use of individual differentiation is still developing. This is in part because the school has more to do in developing the effective use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning across the curriculum.

The school’s budget is used wisely to support instruction, and efforts are made to supplement this through additional grant funding, such as that recently gained to fund nine additional computers. Their acquisition has the potential to enable differentiation to be further developed through individualizing some learning tasks.

The school creates a welcoming environment that seeks to encourage students to attend regularly. It also works hard to get students into school, with effective procedures in place for picking up absences. The current term’s attendance of 94.7% reflects this and the fact that students value school. Students say they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. They say that their teachers know them well and help them learn, and that they are actively engaged in learning.

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.

Few of the current teaching staff were selected on criteria that included their commitment to the use of data because of their length of time in school. Not everyone is yet confident in taking this agenda forward, though it lies at the heart of what the school is committed to introducing. There are expectations that staff will work to support and develop the workshop model through regular collection and use of assessment information, and there are regular opportunities for professional development to support these initiatives, both in and out of school. Teachers discuss their personal professional goals with the principal as part of an annual professional discussion.

Professional development opportunities reflect the needs of the school and its teachers. Consultants and coaches work effectively to provide a good range of opportunities, for example, in maximizing the effectiveness of the workshop model, and the needs revealed by data for maximizing opportunities for the students. Teachers also benefit from development opportunities outside school, with an expectation that they circulate notes to benefit others.

The principal informally observes teaching regularly, and also undertakes formal observation in line with statutory requirements. Coaches also undertake informal observation. Intervisitations have taken place, though they are not a prominent part of school life. One recent example was to give teachers opportunities to look at practice around the development of classroom libraries and the leveling of books. Coaches also work with teachers to evaluate results and teachers have the opportunity to meet together monthly. Because there is now a considerable amount of formal and informal data, as well as individual student data folders, teachers are developing skills of flexibility in tailoring teaching to take identified needs into account in order to maximize learning, thus enabling students to reach their full potential.

There have been good examples of support coming from outside to widen and promote the broader curriculum, most notably the extremely successful link with a local artist. This allowed students to research projects around “communities” before producing some excellent painting onto silk which are on display in the school.

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 way in which data is collected and maintained in individual student folders as the year progresses means that the needs of each student can be monitored on a regular basis. The same is also true of measuring student progress towards interim and end of grade goals. This allows for considerable flexibility in implementing the curriculum, with opportunities being taken to change elements of teaching, or other practice, that do not seem to be effective. Progress towards goals is also monitored by the principal, who regularly collects samples of students’ work in order to audit the progress being made.

The available data now allows for comparisons to be made between individuals and by groups, both within the grade and as students go through the school. A good range of formal and informal assessments and diagnostic measures provide clear evidence of progress and teachers are developing their skills of flexibility in responding to data, though this is qualified by the extent to which they have taken the use of data into their professional practice. There is now the potential for the flexible realignment of instruction, for example, by trying new strategies if it is clear that those already tried have not been successful. In this way, the use of data will support the individualization of learning that is already becoming a feature of instructional practice when it is at its best in the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Carteret School (PS 026)	∅	✓	+
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	