



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Crotona Park West School**

**Public School / Middle School 004**

**1701 Fulton Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10457**

**Principal: Kim Outerbridge**

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**Reviewer: Peter Williman**

# Content of the report

## **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

## **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

## **Part 3: Main Findings**

Overall evaluation

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

## **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Crotona Park West School is an elementary and middle empowerment school that serves 583 students in grades K through 8. The student population comprises 43% Black students, 55% Hispanic students and 3% Asian and other students. Special education students represent 24% of the total school population while 15% of students are English language learners. The school receives Title 1 funding for 85.7% of students, which is higher than is usually found. Most recent attendance statistics indicate that the school average attendance of 88.6% is well below similar and City schools.

This is an empowerment school. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is highly committed to the welfare and achievement of her students and works very effectively to convey the school vision, to raise expectations
- The school collects and analyzes a wide range of data and is beginning to use it effectively to understand the progress of students and to raise achievement.
- The school has developed a very sound basis for an integrated record system to share objectives and targets at school, grade, class, and student level.
- The assistant principals, Teacher's Centre manager and coaches perform their individual and collective responsibilities effectively.
- Faculties work cohesively within their teams to develop data-driven instruction.
- Students recognize the improvements to their school and the consequent benefits to their learning.
- The curriculum maps for English language arts and mathematics are detailed and well structured to support instructional goals.
- The Student Progress Template is a very valuable initiative to raise student awareness of their next steps.
- The administration and coaches lead a strong focus on formal and informal professional development to support teachers' understanding and use of data.

### What the school needs to improve

- Consolidate the understanding and confidence of all staff to use data effectively to set targets and to extend differentiated teaching and learning.
- Share best practice and develop greater consistency in record keeping.
- Analyze data in greater detail to identify the relative progress of groups and subgroups of students.
- Specify interim objectives, timeframes and assessment opportunities for school goals with greater clarity to facilitate systematic monitoring of the progress of plans and to enable timely revision.
- Develop strategies to engage parents more extensively in the life and work of the school.
- Improve the attendance of students.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

The vision of The Crotona Park West School is to be 'a level 3 - 4 school'. The key goal of the school is to develop data-driven instruction. The administration has established a strong basis with staff and students through which to achieve these ends and as a result the school is improving in its social, cultural and academic performance. The administration and coaches work well as a team under the determined leadership of the principal to use the school's breadth of data effectively for their information and to guide faculty effectiveness. Teachers are clearly beginning to understand the value of analyzed data to inform instruction and to combine it with their own observations to inform their differentiation. The recently established 'student data template' enables each student to understand his or her achievement and next learning steps. Professional development underpins both the faculty's developing confidence to use data and the associated strengthening of instructional skills

### 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 gathers a wide range of data and uses it effectively to understand students' academic progress and personal perspectives. As a result the administration is in a good position to guide the work of the school. In addition to results from State and City tests, data from school programs and periodic tests are combined with student surveys and individual student data reviews to provide a sound basis and breadth to that understanding. In particular, the school uses self-generated tests and past State tests well to give pre- and post-teaching assessment information to measure progress. Data on attendance is collated and published and this raises awareness of its importance. The 'Student Data Template' gives each student an updated record of his or her progress. Extensive and well-constructed surveys of student views provide a very useful insight into the impact of many aspects of school instruction, life and culture. Recorded data is effectively analyzed and generally well presented in graphical and tabular form to give accessible pictures of the progress of individual students, classes and grades.

The school has made a research study to monitor closely the progress of English language learners because of the necessity of changing their service from a bilingual class to monolingual classes. Almost all students transitioned well as a result. The progress of special education students is effectively monitored through individual education programs and within the combined teaching team classes. The use of data to review the progress of other groups and sub-groups, such as those of ethnicity, within and across subjects, is only partially developed. This results in a weaker element in the school's comparative data which otherwise is appropriately managed. Comparisons with similar and other school are made using data and visits. The administration works well with the data coordinator to measure school, cohort and class achievement against previous performance and to

identify patterns of progress. Leaders and coaches monitor progress in English language arts and mathematics particularly closely.

**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.**

School planning is undertaken in teams and led effectively by the administration and coaches at all levels and for all subjects. Teachers, in their grade teams, review data from assessments, student outcomes and conferencing and, additionally, their own use of data, to plan next steps in learning for their class. They use the curriculum maps effectively and flexibly to plan units and series of lessons. Teachers adjust their instruction appropriately for individual students on a day-to-day basis. They are developing data records of their work to inform these decisions but this is not sufficiently consistent within and across classes to be fully informative. For example, conference notes in many cases do not include the outcome of the targeted next steps and therefore the impact of teaching is not clear. However, teachers are using annotation, including that of students, to good effect to identify strengths and next steps on, for instance, bulletin boards and in some journals.

The school has clearly defined goals to attain its overall vision. However, plans such as those in the Comprehensive Education Plan are not sufficiently detailed in order for the progress and outcomes to be monitored. Timeframes and steps to achieving the objectives are weakly defined. Measureable outcomes are not all sufficiently related to achievable targets based on school data and some success criteria do not sufficiently specify the tangible impacts of the plans.

The school has recently established a very good system for regularly sharing detail and perceptions of progress with students and equally engaging them in personal responsibility to define their next steps using the ‘Student Data Template’. This is beginning to raise students’ expectations of themselves very effectively, particularly set in the context of the culture of school improvement lead by the administration and faculty. Despite the school’s best efforts, although they are supportive, parents are not substantially engaged in the work of the school and this is a weakness in the principal’s strategy to strengthen the commitment of all to endorse the school vision.

**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 has strengthened the capacity of the curriculum to reinforce school goals through the rewriting of detailed curriculum maps in English language arts and mathematics. The integral State standards and assessments in programs in mathematics and reading effectively assist judgments of achievement. As a result of these features, in addition to meeting mandatory requirements, teachers are more able to identify and substantiate progress in their work and to select appropriate programs to meet student needs.

The latter, in turn, are assisting in the further development of strategies for differentiation. There is an expectation that instruction will follow the workshop model, which is helping to raise the school's profile of achievement. The administration and the coaches monitor the quality of this practice carefully. Some teachers are now more adventurous in using their knowledge of student progress very appropriately to vary the challenge in the independent learning element of the model to match student achievement. This is an area for further consistency in instructional practice. Teachers use programs generally effectively to engage students. A small number of students require better management to benefit from their lessons but these situations are well handled by the leadership. Students are confident of the positive help, respect and response they receive and can expect from their teachers. Attendance averages have fallen despite the priority and procedures in place and this is an unacceptable situation, which the school recognizes must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The school uses its budget and logistical resources effectively to respond to student learning needs as revealed by its data. For example the hiring of a science specialist has improved the quality of instruction and outcomes for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Scheduling common preparation times for teachers enables more extensive planning and reviews of student progress. The systematic introduction of technology has assisted differentiation and broadened curriculum opportunities for students. Teachers are also encouraged to use the benefits as a part of their data recording and analysis as an eighth grade teacher clearly demonstrated through her laptop program.

**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 principal conveys high expectations to leaders and faculty alike and is respected for this characteristic. She has demonstrated her capabilities through the significant change she has brought about within the school in culture and in instructional goals. Thorough hiring procedures have strengthened the administration and ensured that newcomers to the staff are committed to the school vision to improve data driven instruction. As a result school leaders and coaches are very determined and reflective to seek ways to improve student achievement. Teachers are increasingly supportive of the concept as they see the benefits to school improvement and to student outcomes. This change is underpinned by the principal's good knowledge of her staff as a result of her frequent visits to classrooms and very well-documented reviews of lessons and recommendations for improvement.

The results of the school's professional development survey have been integrated effectively with school priorities to develop teachers' understanding of the value of data to informing instruction. The impact of this work is seen in the improved management of learning in classrooms through the workshop model. The school's adoption of the strategy, 'Cycle and Phases', which enables teachers to develop new skills in a phase of work supported by coaches and then to strengthen that new independent instructional skill in successive cycles is effective but as yet not fully institutionalized. The cabinet and curriculum committees have, however, set up systematic 'walkthroughs'. These observations are well focused to improve teacher's knowledge and skills in gathering information through, for example, reviewing conferencing techniques.

At administration, cabinet, grade and subject levels, staff members work effectively in teams to plan and review student progress and their own work. Cabinet cascades its

discussions of data to grade teams who are becoming more aware the value of data analysis and integrating their understandings into their meetings. Administration and coaches are supporting this process very appropriately. Communication is suitably strengthened through these contacts. Anecdotal evidence demonstrates how far the school has progressed in stabilizing the routines and expectations of students day-to-day to create a purposeful working environment. This environment is broadened for students through the engagement of partners such as the Phipps Corporation after school program and Comp2kids which has successively provided computers free to students.

**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.**

Although the school has effective means to evaluate each student's individual progress, these systems are not specifically identified as a means of measuring the progress of, for instance, the Comprehensive Education Plan, nor are they an element in setting interim goals. This is a weakness of strategic planning. The administration purposefully reviews comparative data of, for example, walkthroughs and the cycle and phases strategy to identify the relative progress of classes within its overarching goals for school improvement. As a result of the work of the assistant principals and the data from comparative review the administration adjusts plans. For example, the principal responds immediately where there is evidence of insufficient progress in the goal for data driven instruction and sets a clear imperative for change. The school goals represent strategies that require longer than the annual cycle to implement. As a result the school is reflective and flexible in adjusting planning in successive phases. It is responsive to the impact of implementation of changes but retains a focal determination to use data to raise achievement.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Crotona Park West School PS/MS (004)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>		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"> <li>ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>	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"> <li>all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	