



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Kingsbridge School

Public School 7

**3201 Kingsbridge Avenue
Bronx
NY 10463**

Principal: Renee Cloutier

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Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs

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

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

Public School 7 is an elementary school, kindergarten through grade 5, situated in the Kingsbridge area of the Bronx. It has 632 students enrolled, of which 10% are special education students.

Approximately 29% of the students are English language learners. A third of these students arrived during the past school year. The students come from over 20 countries including the Dominican Republic, Albania, Ukraine, Kosovo, Turkey, Yemen, Bangladesh, Korea, and Pakistan.

Eighty-one percent of students have Title 1 eligibility, which is high for New York City.

At 93%, attendance is high compared with similar schools and with the City as a whole.

Only a quarter of the students follow through from kindergarten to grade 5. The remainder join the school in grade 3 from Public School 207.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is a vibrant and colorful place where students are happy and fulfilled.
- Students enjoy coming to a school where they are respected, safe and well taught.
- Parents see the school as a supportive place that assists their children in developing high standards of behavior and achievement.
- Teaching generally challenges the full range of performance and values all students.
- The behavior of students in classrooms and around the school is very good.
- The integration of art within the core curriculum is very successful, assisting in the development of self-worth and sensitivity.
- The new principal is highly respected by students and has handled a period of transition well.
- Senior staff use data well within the school in identifying both school-wide trends and individual needs.
- Most teachers are becoming increasingly confident in using observational and assessment data to group students more effectively.
- The school has good systems for supporting students who experience difficulties in learning and those for whom English is a new language.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the use of classroom portfolios and assessment to support lesson planning and differentiated instruction is consistent throughout the school.
- Develop the analysis of data to evaluate the impact of instruction on the various groups represented in the school.
- Use data more effectively to set measurable goals for individuals, groups and whole-school improvement.
- Provide more opportunities for classroom teachers to meet to share data and discuss instructional strategies.
- Provide more opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal is new to the school and succeeds two well-established and respected predecessors. She inherited a school with a good reputation for its care of students and the imaginative way in which art is integrated within the core curriculum. During the six months of her tenure, she has introduced a number of initiatives, particularly relating to the more detailed use of data within the school. She has also sought to continue and enhance the art and technology curriculum. Staff and parents recognize the value of this in creating a smooth changeover.

Her two assistant principals have particular skills in special education and work with English language learners. They and the coaches have been instrumental in modeling and explaining a number of new initiatives to staff. Parents and students attest to the fact that there has been no disruption over the past half-year and the high retention rate of staff is also testimony to this.

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 makes effective use of all available test results and other assessment data, including classroom portfolios, to monitor trends within the school. At classroom level, individual educational plans and commercial assessments provide detailed records of students' strengths and areas for development. At grade and whole-school level, there is good use of external as well as internal test results. In this way all staff have a clear picture of individual students, the performance within grades and trends throughout the school. This data is supplemented by the knowledge staff have of each of their students.

The school is very clear about the progress of special education students and English language learners. Systems are in place which enable easy identification of English language learners who are 'beginning', 'intermediate' and advanced'. This data, in turn, drives some of the recent curriculum developments. After-school sessions for both high-achieving and special education students are examples of positive and successful initiatives. In addition, senior staff are able to make very useful comparisons between those students who have been at the school from the beginning and those who join the school in grade 3. This data has been very useful in discussions with Public School 207, the school from which students come. In particular, the schools have been able to analyze reading skills and consider curriculum and professional development together. An emphasis on writing has been one direct result.

The increased use of data is beginning to allow the school to analyze data relating to sub-groups, although at present this is at an early stage. The school's data analysis system is not yet detailed enough to allow a full and meaningful comparison of the performance of various groups, or to evaluate the school's effectiveness with these groups. It makes

some comparisons with previous performance and is looking to find similar schools with which to compare. However, this aspect is under-developed, not allowing the school to identify trends of performance for ethnic or other sub-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 degree of collaboration has increased considerably in recent months. Grade meetings give greater opportunities for faculty to plan together and also consider data relating to performance in key areas of the curriculum such as English language arts and mathematics. The modeling of collaboration by senior staff has been effective. They have looked at data and identified responses that relate to scheduling, target-setting and curriculum changes. Assistant principals and coaches have then taken these recommendations to grade meetings and participated in a parallel process where classroom teachers also use their own data to make similar decisions. Many teachers have embraced this way of working, but some still find the process difficult. Professional development is seeking to remedy this.

One of the school’s great strengths is its response to the needs of special education students and those for whom English is a new language. In both instances, there is a promptness of response, starting with teacher identification and moving on through academic intervention service support to, occasionally, external advice and support. Knowing their students so well, teachers are able to consider the personal as well as the academic implications of learning difficulties. For the 29% of students who are English language learners, support has been individual and organizational, with successful bilingual classes developing well throughout the school.

Staff have continued their work in developing individual student portfolios and added a number of techniques introduced by the principal. Individual education plan targets are now sharper and assist learning well. Conferencing, log books and informal assessments are gradually becoming an integral part of all teaching within the school. They already contribute to classroom grouping. This is not consistently carried out by all teachers. They are keen to pursue this in-class assessment and target-setting, but often find it too demanding of time.

The school is moving to a situation where many staff impart high expectations to students, but not all are setting group and individual goals. The drive for student achievement is present in all teachers, but this does not always show itself in detailed planning and goal-setting. All staff are willing to share information with parents and are developing ways of using data to explain where a student is and where to go next. More could be done to develop detailed discussions with parents with reference to class performance and homework.

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 curriculum is aligned to the mandated curriculum. Many topics within English and mathematics are developed because students may manifest a difficulty with inference and prediction. The school has a well-deserved reputation for art work that is well integrated within the mandated curriculum. In addition very good technology, music and performance work takes place. All of these subjects are closely aligned to the core elements of the curriculum without losing any of their spontaneity. Thus, in one class a science project on fish was linked very closely with art work including collages containing fish eyes and tails. The art work, in particular, adds vibrancy to the school and colorful displays and bulletin boards encourage many students for whom the written and spoken language is not an easy medium in which to express ideas and emotions. Opportunities for physical activity for students are limited. There is more work to be done in science and the principal is addressing this through visits to a laboratory in a partner school.

Teachers are becoming more aware of the need to differentiate planning and instruction and senior staff are increasingly working with staff where this is not taking place. Classrooms are characterized by a high level of engagement on the part of both students and teachers. For example, a lesson with a bilingual class had students reading a drama script with real interest and intonation. Good work is taking place within the collaborative team teaching class and this is also another aspect of the growing collaboration among staff. In other lessons, grouping is clearly built upon a detailed knowledge of students’ personalities and abilities. Staff make good use of individual education plans to develop individual work in close cooperation with academic intervention staff.

Information has been well used in the allocation of funds. The need to develop technology has seen the purchase laptops. An analysis of English results has led to the purchase of specific texts to develop sub-skills. The librarian has developed a resource which supports the curriculum and stimulates students well. Significant changes have been made with the ending of flexible scheduling and the development of preparation sessions that allow grade staff to meet regularly. Good use has been made of substitute teachers to release staff for collaborative work.

Attendance is well monitored and has now risen to 93%. Staff respect their students and parents recognize this as a very positive characteristic of the school.

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.

Professional development takes place in many different ways. Senior staff have developed their skills in the use of data and are developing techniques with which to model these with classroom staff. Classroom teachers are working closely with ‘Schools Attuned’ and the Learning Support Centre. They speak highly about the learning-centered instruction work they carry out, which has contributed greatly to the reflective and proactive staff group that exists today.

Recruitment is carefully monitored to ensure that staff have skills that lend themselves to new ways of working, including the use of data, and the school has a good track record in recruiting successful teaching students who have worked at Kingsbridge.

The principal is new, but has very successfully shown respect and support for the school's key beliefs. She has also ensured that day-to-day routines are efficient and that response to concerns raised by students and parents is prompt. Staff recognize this and are the more willing to cooperate in developing the new ways of working that she is introducing. A walk around the school shows a principal who is respected by the students. She, her assistant principals and coaches observe classes regularly. Other staff also have opportunities for inter-visitations, and they now relish the opportunities to share and observe good practice. Kingsbridge is a large school, but the one-on-one discussions that take place between staff and the degree to which staff members communicate with and support each other is unusually high.

The school is able to draw on many community services to support its students. Good links have been made with local museums, while the 'Doing Art Together' has introduced imaginative ways in which parents can work with their children. The school's keen interest in world faiths is supported by the Hebrew Home for the Aged and links with Horace Mann School allows laboratory work to take place in science.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan is detailed and thoughtful. The new principal and her leadership team have followed through its goals and are currently in the process of putting together their own plan for the next academic year. It is clear from the school's very insightful self-evaluation that they have drawn upon a wide range of data, staff views and respected educational theory to identify where the school needs to go now in its quest for high achievement. Over the past six months, many aspects of the school and the students it serves have been evaluated. This has meant reference to standardized data from external assessments as well as informal information from classroom staff.

Some key developments have taken place, such as ending mass preparation times and synchronizing schedules. Each development is reviewed regularly to ascertain its effectiveness and the school responds flexibly when changes are required. Some are in their infancy, such as the development of a new technology laboratory. Yet others, including more systematic meetings relating to planning, target-setting and joint professional development with Public School 207 are in draft form. However, the success of many of the new initiatives and the structures that the principal now identifies for multi-disciplinary review and planning groups indicates that the next Comprehensive Education Plan will be both rigorous and focused on key areas for development.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Kingsbridge School (PS 7)	∅	✓	+
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	