



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Charles James Fox  
Community School 150**

**920 East 167 Street  
Bronx  
NY 10459**

**Principal: Mr. E. Irizarry**

**Dates of review: October 25 – 27, 2006  
Reviewer: M.Groucutt**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Charles James Fox is a Title 1 school serving students from kindergarten through to grade 5. It has 715 students, of whom 11% are special education students and a further 30% are English language learners, mainly speaking Spanish as their home language. Recent immigrants have arrived mainly from the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Honduras. Attendance over the last school year was at 90.8%, which is just below the rate for similar schools and 2% below the average for the City as a whole. The school is in its first year of restructuring, having just lost its sixth grade. The view of the school is that this has been a benefit, making the school a calmer and more easily managed environment for the younger students. The principal has held the position for five years and has been instrumental in bringing about sustained improvement in the school's results and general morale during that time.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and the two assistant principals work well as an effective team, bringing vision and purpose to the school.
- There is a very good range of data, formal and informal, that enables teachers to track individual progress through the school year.
- The use of assessment binders by all teachers creates a common system that enables individual progress to be monitored at a glance.
- Teachers show a real commitment to the school and its students.
- The professional development team provides very effective support for in-house training.
- The academic intervention services team covers each grade, providing targeted services for those in greatest need.
- The effective use of the Title 1 grant is an important element in being able to minimize class size.
- Good use of common planning time enables grade teams to work together well in planning and delivering the curriculum.
- Increasingly effective curriculum mapping is enabling grade teams to develop common expectations, resources and anticipated outcomes.
- The colorful pictures painted on the doors into the hallways help create a cheerful and visually stimulating environment.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the use of data to take account of the needs of different groups of students.
- Develop a common format across all grades for tracking individual progress from an initial baseline on entry.
- Raise the performance in English language arts to that achieved in mathematics.
- Increase the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning across the whole curriculum.
- Seek opportunities to develop a specialist provision for physical education teaching and measure the physical development of the students, to supplement information about their intellectual development.
- Develop a process for professional discussions with teachers and administrators to agree on measurable objectives and professional development needs for the coming year.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

Charles James Fox is a data-rich school which uses the information it has on every student in an effective way. As a result the students are grouped effectively and there is flexibility in amending the curriculum to meet identified needs. However, the school is not yet comparing the relative progress of different groups and so it is failing to get the maximum benefit from its data.

The school has made very good progress since the arrival of the current principal. He is very visible in and around the school and has established a very good rapport with students and parents. He has introduced effective mechanisms that support individual tracking and teachers now regard this as a part of their everyday professional lives. There is very good support for special education students and English language learners. The professional development of teachers is good. Staff are very committed to the school and its students and there is a high level of staffing stability, which is instrumental in raising standards of achievement. An interesting measure of the way in which the school is held in high regard is the fact that 160 students who moved away from the school's area have still chosen to remain at the school, some traveling considerable distances to attend.

### 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.**

A range of data, both formal and informal, is gathered throughout the year and used effectively by teachers to monitor individual student progress. Teachers are comfortable with the use of data and so gain an objective and constantly updated picture of their students. Analysis of test scores, coupled with information from the Princeton Review, is used effectively to identify individual strengths and areas for next steps. A range of data acquired during the year from running records, student conferencing and assessments from tests, quizzes and other informal sources is added as the year progresses in order to maintain an up-to-date picture. Because of delays in receiving the results of State and City tests, students take a simulated exam at the start of the school year, which provides an effective baseline for measuring performance.

Instructional leaders compare school performance against that of other schools in the City. This comparison emphasizes the progress and rising achievement that have been apparent since the arrival of the current principal.

The school does not currently measure the performance and progress of different groups of students. It is therefore not able, for example, to compare the progress of boys compared to girls, or of students from different ethnic groups, other than through the information provided on the record card. However, that is not to say that there is no information on individuals within broader groupings. For example, data on special

education students and English language learners is maintained carefully so that a clear picture of progress and areas for concern are known to teachers.

**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.**

Teachers make effective use of data to monitor individual progress and set goals for students irrespective of their age, gender or ethnic background. This is done through the use of assessment binders, which are maintained throughout the year by each teacher. These contain individual student scores from formal and informal assessments and provide a clear picture of performance at a glance. Portfolios of work are also developed as the year progresses, providing valuable additional evidence about each student’s learning. Discussions with students confirmed the view that each teacher has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development for each member of the class. As a result all students, particularly the most vulnerable ones, feel that they get very good support from their teachers.

The school is effective in placing students into differentiated groups, enabling them to work with others who are performing at the same level. Support for these groups is effective, and when appropriate is targeted at those in greatest need. Teachers use the data contained in assessment binders to analyze individual performance and to set individual goals. There is, however, insufficient use of differentiation for individual students in many classes.

Since different formal tests have been used in the different grades, it is not possible to demonstrate the progress made by individuals from a baseline on entry into school until they leave at the end of fifth grade. This means the school does not have a complete picture of progress over time as students move through the school.

**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 schedule provides common planning time, focusing effectively on the data available for students, with teachers meeting regularly in grade teams. This allows the school to maintain flexibility in its groupings of students performing at the same level and to adjust the curriculum to meet individual needs. Curriculum mapping is used to good effect, supporting the effective delivery of the curriculum over the whole school year. One of the biggest improvements made by the new principal has been the way in which staff are now totally committed to the school and are very willing to accept responsibility for the outcomes of their students. Lessons have become more interesting and students have responded by becoming more engaged in their own learning. They also appreciate the fact that their teachers respect them and appreciate their efforts. As a result of the positive developments in teaching, students are learning more. However, standards in English language arts are not as good as those achieved in mathematics. The school has

purchased a new set of textbooks and is taking a positive approach to meeting this challenge.

The principal uses part of the Title 1 funding in order to provide additional staffing, which results in class sizes being kept to a minimum, the largest class having just 24 students. This supports effective learning. Similarly, professional development is supported internally through an effective team of coaches that cover all major curriculum areas, modeling lessons and acting as consultants to teachers, enabling them to develop better practice. The academic intervention services team has been expanded and now provides dedicated support to each grade. Throughout the school there are concerted efforts to help students to become critical thinkers and to support teachers in getting out of a “teaching to the test” approach.

The one area of curriculum planning that lacks clear focus and direction at the moment is in physical education. There is no specialist teacher in the school and at the moment teachers take their own classes to the gym. Also, because teachers have different levels of knowledge and ability, physical education classes vary in quality and in learning outcomes. It also means that no attempt is made to plot the physical development of students as they progress through school. At the moment there is insufficient use of technology to support teaching and learning across the curriculum, so that opportunities for supporting individualized curriculums are lost.

The school environment creates a stimulating learning environment and bulletin boards display students’ work alongside the appropriate rubric. This is also illustrated on the artfully painted doorways into the hallways.

**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 and his two assistant principals provide clear and inspirational leadership. The school has made very good progress in terms of its results since the arrival of the principal, who is now in his fifth year. Prior to this the school was marked by the low morale of teachers and the underachievement of students. Teachers now show a clear dedication to the school and to developing effective practice. This has led to improvements in student achievement, which are now clear and continuing. The challenge now is to meet the requirements for adequate yearly progress in English language arts, which the school is addressing vigorously.

Teaching is observed regularly by the principal and his assistants. The resulting professional development is used well to develop effective classroom practice. Inter-visitations are also used effectively and this is particularly the case for younger teachers, who not only receive support from an experienced faculty member, but also observe more experienced colleagues. Teachers are given opportunities to observe good practice in teaching both within the school and on occasion in other schools. Teachers are open to input from colleagues and plan and collaborate together effectively. This has raised the level of teaching and learning throughout the school. However, there is currently no formal opportunity for teachers to sit with a supervisor for an in-depth discussion of what students are learning over the course of a year and objectives that might be pursued in the year to come.

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

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school is developing effective systems that allow teachers to use diagnostic assessments during the school year to support goal setting for all students. Results are used to amend an individual's curriculum in order to best meet need. Differentiated grouping allow students to work together with others who are at the same level of attainment. However, more needs to be done to strengthen individual differentiation to maximize the outcomes for every student.

Teachers maintain records of assessment and generally use it effectively. This allows them to track individual progress. The development of individual portfolios supports this further, because it provides additional evidence of progress and achievement. The data binders maintained throughout the year by all teachers are used well and are now providing a real focus for planning. Teachers use the range of information they collect on individual students in an effective way. They are able to demonstrate the exact progress made by every student as the year progresses and in the weekly grade meetings they collaborate well, using the data on their own students to provide focus for curriculum discussion and, if needed, modification. There is still room for further refinement and development around the use of data to provide an objective picture of the performance and progress of different groups of students.

When looking at the standards and results achieved by students it is clear that this is a school that has moved forward a long way. This is to the great credit of everyone in the school, who are a real team. With the processes already in place, and their further refinement where necessary, there is clear potential for this school to continue its improvement into the future.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Charles James Fox [CS 150]</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	