



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**McKinley Park**

**Elementary School 127**

**7805 7 Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11228**

**Principal: Pauline Frank**

**Dates of review: February 14 - 15, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Jo Storrs**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

McKinley Park is an elementary school with 375 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 21% Hispanic, 57% White and 20% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 72% eligibility.

The school has significant mobility. Since September 2007, 77 students have left and students from other countries have joined the school. The school has an impressive building that is over a hundred years old and recently refurbished providing a multi-purpose room for gym, dance and drama. In addition, the school has created a music room to house the keyboards and supporting furniture donated by a local company.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal's enthusiastic, sensitive and focused leadership motivates staff and students.
- The focus on the individual learning needs of each student is a high priority across the school.
- The excellent administration uses data rigorously to gain a detailed understanding of the performance and progress of every student.
- The sense of community and collegiality between the talented staff and students accelerates students' personal and academic development.
- Highly motivated leaders and staff work in close harmony to improve instruction and intervention and to meet each student's specific needs.
- The beautiful learning environment and presentation of students' work and achievements emphasize the school's high expectations.
- The rich, varied curriculum and numerous out of school activities stimulate the students, so attendance is high.
- Parents are valued and enjoy the wide range of opportunities the school provides for them to support their children's education.
- Clear procedures, agreed and supported by the whole school community, enable the school to run smoothly and efficiently in a tranquil atmosphere.
- Detailed monitoring of all aspects of the school focuses on improvements and continuing effectiveness.

### What the school needs to improve

- Maintain a focus on training staff to use technology and new data systems effectively to enhance students' learning.
- Set more specific, ambitious goals to raise student achievement in Level 4 in all subjects.
- Continue to develop programs and differentiate instruction to challenge high achievers to gain higher levels, particularly in math.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### Progress made since the last review

Overall, the school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is well developed.**

The principal's enthusiastic, sensitive and focused leadership acts as an inspiration to staff and students. Administration scrupulously gathers data to focus on successfully meeting the individual learning needs of every student. High expectations permeate all aspects of school life and are visible in the beautiful learning environment and displays of students' work and achievements. Students benefit from the motivating and varied curriculum, numerous enrichment and out of school activities and targeted, individual interventions. The school functions smoothly and efficiently and provides a tranquil learning environment. As a result, students enjoy school and attendance is high.

The sense of community and collegiality across the school is directed at nurturing each student's academic and personal development. Talented leaders and staff work in close harmony to devise school goals but they are not ambitious enough to raise student achievement in Level 4 in all subjects specifically. They are innovative in planning programs and instruction but not all teachers are fully confident in the use of new technologies to accelerate learning and to motivate students, particularly the higher achievers in math. Leaders and staff know students well and work hard to ensure programs and interventions closely meet the specific needs of each student.

Parents are valued and welcomed and feel part of the community. They enjoy the many events designed to help them support their children's education. Rigorous monitoring procedures of all aspects of the school closely linked to planning and goal setting keep student achievement under constant review and support the continued effectiveness of this thriving school.

The school carefully addressed the recommendations of the last Quality Review. It analyzes data thoroughly for all groups of students and every class has physical education lessons in the new multi-purpose room. The school has accomplished much in identifying and improving programs for higher achievers but they remain an area for further development.

The inquiry team is playing a significant role in goal setting and is proactively improving the programs and achievements of the focus group, comprised of grade 5 students, who did not make the expected progress in English language arts between grades 3 and 4. The group includes some higher achievers.

## **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 the student's progress over time.**

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

The principal's unswerving focus on meeting the individual learning needs of each student drives data analysis. With the assistant principal, she scrupulously analyzes a full range of on line and school generated data from tests, assessments, portfolios of students' work and other relevant records such as student attitudes, attendance and homework response. This provides administration, teachers and support staff with an accurate picture of the performance and progress of individual and groups of students. It also enables the school to compare its performance year on year. This demonstrates that overall results have improved progressively and that fluctuations are due to significant student mobility. The school constantly gathers gender and ethnic information to ensure consistent progress although the small proportions of ethnic groups in each grade make patterns difficult to identify. There are good relationships between the local schools, some of which have similar populations. These schools use every opportunity to compare, learn from each other and to share effective practices.

The school uses enrollment information to group students into heterogonous or collaborative team teaching classes with suitable programs that meet their individual needs. This detailed data also ensures that programs meet the specific requirements of the individual education plans of special education students and the proficiency level of English language learners. Classes are small, so teachers and support staff are able to thoroughly track and analyze the progress of each student and change programs or interventions quickly, to better meet students' needs. This process continues across the school based upon accurate and consistent assessment and provides precise support for any student falling behind or with learning difficulties. Administration and teachers are skilled in using school data. They recognize the importance of continuing to provide training and support to enable all staff to use the new computerized data system effectively, to improve student achievement further.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.**

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

The school's sense of community results in high levels of collaboration between everyone. Relevant data and constructive discussions about individual students and subjects give administration and staff an accurate understanding of every student. This level of detail enables measurable school goals to be set to meet the principal's unbending vision for every student to achieve grade level or above. The school is successfully raising levels for most students but has not yet established ambitious and specific goals to raise the proportion of students achieving Level 4, in all subjects. The school plans, systematically tracks and adjusts suitable grade, class and individual student goals and programs to make sure the needs of individuals or groups of students are effective and accelerate learning. For instance, the school successfully designed and implemented an individualized program for an underperforming English language learner until he became a confident, proficient reader. The inquiry team, comprising school leaders and non-class based staff, is playing a significant complementary role in setting goals and successful programs for the focus group. This group includes the lowest one third and higher-

achieving grade 5 students who did not make the expected progress in English language arts tests. It meets monthly and uses the new City computerized system proactively to provide more effective intervention strategies that are improving the performance of the focus group.

The focus on the individual is a high priority across the school. It originates from the principal's vision of achieving the highest standards, which all members of the school community clearly understand and endorse. These consistently high expectations are evident in every aspect of school life and considerably enhance student learning and achievement. Parents are valued and the school's open door policy encourages them to provide or receive information regarding their children's education. Regular meetings and workshops offer other occasions to promote the school's goals and strengthen parental partnership. Parents enjoy these opportunities, value the relationship, and find the school welcoming, sympathetic and supportive of them and their children.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

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

The school's priority is to be successful in developing the whole child. It supplements the mandated curriculum by additional focused support for small groups of students such as improving the proficiency of English language learners at the same level of proficiency. The school provides a rich and varied curriculum. This includes an impressive variety of enrichment and out of school activities and trips to extend students' horizons, plus enjoyable celebrations to motivate and promote excellence.

The talented and highly motivated leaders and staff play a vital role in encouraging students to do their best. Leaders are open to innovative ideas. Teachers and staff recognize they are accountable but know they are trusted and respected as professionals. They work in close harmony, constantly improving instruction and intervention to ensure they meet the specific needs of each student. The school has designed new programs to challenge higher achievers, but does not consistently apply them in all subjects such as math.

High levels of respect and trust between the whole school community, and the "Competent Kids, Caring Classrooms" program, successfully enhances students' personal and academic development and their sense of community. As a result, students enjoy coming to school and attendance is high.

The principal's focus on using all resources to accelerate students' achievement and develop effective, responsible learners has led to imaginative and successful staffing and scheduling decisions. For instance, students benefit from music and learning to play the recently donated keyboards. The school has introduced new technology such as "smart boards" and computerized programs to accelerate learning but not all teachers are confident to use them effectively. Inventive scheduling of classes makes best use of time and facilities and is pivotal in differentiating instruction through focused, small group instruction. It ensures excellent support for those students with specific learning needs and challenges and extends the highest achievers in some lessons, enabling them to achieve more.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

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

The principal's enthusiastic, sensitive and focused leadership acts as an inspiration for staff and students. The smallness of the school enables it to operate as a close-knit community with clear procedures to ensure it runs smoothly and productively in a tranquil learning environment. The compassionate and focused leaders regularly observe instruction formally and informally and provide constructive feedback to improve instruction. This successful strategy keeps administration constantly updated about the quality of instruction and student achievement, and determines professional development decisions and targeted support from coaches. Staff training is wide ranging and carefully designed to meet whole school and individual teacher needs. Effective mentors and their gifted colleagues give very good support for teachers new to the profession. The friendly nature of the school and the teachers' desire to evaluate and sharpen instruction enable intervisitation and meetings to feature as effective means of accelerating learning and substantially benefits students.

The small team of support staff provides expert support and works closely with the faculty to enhance students' academic and personal development. For instance, the social worker provides a range of supportive activities for students, such as the "boys' club", for students without male role models at home. Leaders and staff know the students very well, so notice and resolve any problems quickly to ensure that the students' progress is not impaired. To compensate for its limited resources, the school has developed an impressive range of beneficial links with outside academic and community agencies, which effectively support students' overall development. For instance dance instruction from "Young Dancers in Repertory" and intervisitation with local schools benefit student's performance.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

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

The school's meticulous monitoring procedures for academic achievement and progress also include students' attitudes and social and emotional development. Administration thoroughly collates all available data, which provides an overview of the school's performance, and leads seamlessly into planning and further goal setting. This culture of goal setting, planning and evaluation is consistent across the school.

Teachers use regular formal and informal assessments, analysis of students' work and homework, and their written observations and conferences with students to measure students' progress. Support staff make good use of diagnostic tools when required and work with teachers to assess the effectiveness of plans and interventions, altering them when necessary. Administration carries out rigorous monitoring procedures, including observations and discussions with individual and groups of staff, which provide an accurate knowledge of developments in instruction and performance and identify areas for improvement. The school makes constant use of all evidence and a wide range of data to drive improvements in all aspects, and to continue to push the school forward. The principals' high expectations of herself are mirrored by dedicated teachers and staff who are fully committed to the school's vision of "striving for excellence" for the students.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: McKinley Park</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				X	

<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				X	

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>