



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Sarah Anderson School

Elementary School 009

**100 West 84 Street
New York
NY 10024**

Principal: Diane Brady

**Dates of review: May 7 – 8, 2008
Lead Reviewer: Isobel MacNaughtan**

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

Progress made since the last review

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 Sarah Anderson School is an elementary school with 506 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 10.9% Black, 24.9% Hispanic, 54.7% White, 7.9% Asian and 8% Native American students. The student body includes 5.3% English language learners and 10.1% 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 94.8%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The Sarah Anderson School shares a building and some facilities with K-8 Citywide Gifted School.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has exceptional leadership which ensures that all that goes on in the school focuses on the highest quality of education for the students.
- The school has an outstandingly strong inclusive community culture which embraces students, teachers and parents and caregivers.
- The school has developed extremely accessible and robust systems for data collection which ensure a very high rate of student progress.
- School development goals are created through strong collaboration between principal, staff and school leadership team who together rigorously evaluate previous goals and initiatives.
- Exemplary and imaginative goal setting systems for individual students have been developed which make students confident and knowledgeable learners.
- There is a vibrant and varied curriculum, which engages students fully in their learning.
- Sophisticated professional structures and development opportunities ensure an exceptionally high and consistent quality of classroom teaching.
- The planning cycle is fully developed at every level and is the servant, and never the master, of the school's impressive curriculum programs.
- The school has a clear vision and the stellar level of professional expertise, the culture and the structures combine to drive the school towards its goal.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on existing good practice, to develop systematic peer evaluation with both students and with teachers.
- Redesign student profile cards to reflect curricular changes.
- Continue to train and support staff in the extended analysis and use of student performance data.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report

Overall Evaluation

This school is outstanding.

This is an outstanding school with an exceptional leadership. The administration has utilized a distributive leadership model to create a vision of an inclusive community in which every single student will progress to the highest possible degree. There is a meticulous design for this vision. The whole school community understands and shares in it. The principal demands highly of herself, her staff and of her students. She has created a powerful whole community culture and, as a leader, has clear boundaries as to the decisions that are hers alone. Certain things, such as the inclusive mixed ability organization of the school are not negotiable. Parents and caregivers who make a very good contribution to the school have fully embraced this way of working; that all children are equally valuable.

The school has had an excellent impact on the students that it serves. All students progress very well in the school. Even those who are of lower achievement virtually always improve by one grade level every year and many students progress much faster. The curriculum is exciting and varied with a commendable and highly developed focus on the arts. Students and parents talk enthusiastically about the high levels of fun and challenge in the school. The quality of teaching is exceptionally high and is consistent across the school. Both the principal and the assistant principal are experienced classroom teachers and they bring their experience to bear with a talented and committed staff. Their superb work shows in grade results and in the attitude and engagement of students in class. The students throughout the grades have remarkable ownership of their own learning process.

Underpinning this excellence is a powerful management process which works equally effectively at every level of the school. Individual students and teachers review progress objectively, create challenging goals and then monitor them assiduously. The curriculum therefore is highly sensitive to the individual needs of the student. The principal creates exceptionally good processes and structures to ensure that this happens. The inquiry team has developed its role very effectively. As well as researching into the impact of the newly acquired Rigby system into the school, it scrutinizes the data from across the school on a weekly basis. This ensures that there is no slippage with any individual and that objective analysis informs strategic direction. Over the last year the school has made strides in developing systems to map the value added progress of students more closely and this has been incorporated into the decision making process. The school has an eye to constant improvement and will be further developing its staff and refining its assessment systems over the next session. The management and data systems are rock solid. It is to the vast credit of the principal that these systems support the school and never overwhelm. It has a marvelously creative and caring culture.

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 outstanding.

The school pays meticulous attention to the needs of the individual student and it uses data to ensure differentiation of class work to a high degree. The data systems which the principal and the assistant principal have developed are robust. Staff find them extremely accessible and use them constantly when planning their lessons. The school collects a broad spectrum of data which it categorizes as achievement, demographic, program and perception. The inquiry team scrutinizes cross-school and focus group data on a weekly basis. The members of the team cross check and examine all data from a number of different angles to ensure that it is strong. Comparisons are frequently made with other schools as an aid to understanding trends. Because of this rigor, the administrators have a detailed and refined understanding of the achievements of different classes, grades and diverse groups such as minority ethnic groupings. The systematic analysis of data is embedded at every level of the school. Systems show anticipated development of students’ achievement and regular check-in times are marked in the school calendar. The school responds very quickly to any issue regarding student achievement.

Teachers create precise data on a day-to-day basis using series of checklists along with more formal data arising from tests and unit assessments. Teachers share their understanding of progress in a series of student conferences. Underlying all the work of the school is an insistence on the best possible teaching approaches and practice. There is therefore a strong emphasis on creating full but practical systems to focus precisely on student development. This leads to exceptionally well-crafted and focused differentiation techniques within the classroom. Students progress at a very good and often accelerated rate. As yet, student profile cards do not reflect all the changes in instructional programs.

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 outstanding.

The principal has a full understanding of the need to set challenging goals for herself, for the whole school, for teachers and for students. These are solidly rooted in objective analyses of the current position of the school and the highest of expectations. The planning process has clear dates in the calendar and begins with a rigorous review of the current state of the school. Members of the senior leadership team, including parents and members of staff start this process with learning walks where they review strengths and areas for improvement against a series of baseline measures. This ties in with the other data systems and results in a thoughtful development plan, which is an excellent tool for managing the improvement of the school. The collaborative process deeply values the contribution of all members of the community. This results in a full understanding of and commitment to the forward development of the school.

A system of formative assessment is embedded in every classroom. Students understand the learning aims and objectives for each lesson. They know what is required for a high quality of learning, measure their own progress against rubrics which they fully understand and can articulate and set goals for progress with their teachers. These goals are displayed in a number of ways so that students can refer to them. Kindergarten students, for example, display their reading goals on their “book bags” and use post-it notes to

highlight when they have achieved them. The school systematically sends clear information of progress to parents. As a starting point, students take home self-assessment and explain their work. This is followed up with more formal progress reports. The gains are two-fold as parents gain very good insight into the work in progress and students have further opportunity to reflect on their work. Parents value this and praise the school highly for its responsiveness.

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 outstanding.

One of the school's most powerful features is its rich and varied curriculum. The vitality of the arts program itself is a significant feature. Partnerships with, for example, New York City ballet, have ensured that these developments are top notch. Parents are delighted that their children have the opportunity to study Spanish as well as the opportunities for artistic development. The art work around the school is stunning. The principal is entirely clear in her vision of academic excellence and she makes budgeting decisions to ensure that all the required resources are in place. The structures for supporting teachers in their work are second to none and the level of staffing in each classroom is excellent. The parents fund assistant teachers for every classroom each year. This ensures the highest level of differentiation possible both through pedagogy and from the individual support of teachers. It is rare to remove students from class for specialist intervention; the focus is on continuity of learning within the classroom with the best possible differentiation. The differentiation system is varied and significantly responsive to the needs of the students. This means that students are challenged at their own level. They have a thorough understanding of their own processes and as a result are sophisticated and confident learners. Classrooms are vibrant learning environments and all students know precisely the learning rituals which prevail; transitions take place without pause and collaborative groups work together in skilled ways. The school uses self-assessment and some peer-assessment which it plans to increase as part of its improvement plan. The school has a calm and productive atmosphere. There is ample evidence of trusting and respecting relationships within the school at every level. The principal models this with a high degree of trust in her staff and respect for all involved with the school, particularly parents and caregivers. There is a joy about the process of learning in this school which comes from the variety of techniques used, the rich curriculum, the caring culture and the fact that each student has a satisfaction in knowing that they are progressing and meeting challenges which stretch them.

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 outstanding.

Both the principal and the assistant principal have backgrounds in teacher education. As a result, the structures for supporting teachers to deliver the highest quality of teaching are exceptional. The selection process is very tight and the demands made on teachers are extremely high. Teachers relish these high demands. The principal knows in detail what she expects to see in classrooms. Regular formal and informal visits to the classroom ensure that she gets what she expects. The administrators measure teachers' performance against clear standards and if they drop below the specified baseline in any way, there is an insistence that they raise their game. There are very fine procedures to

support staff to develop to be the best they can be. Appropriate professional development in line with the school's goals is given and teachers collaborate in grade teams to develop joint approaches and to share good practice. Inter-class visitations are a well-developed practice in the school and the use of peer evaluation is an area of focus for school improvement. Three leading professionals coach and support teachers to achieve the best practice possible. This leads to a consistent extremely high standard of teaching and learning throughout the school. There is an exciting arts program in the school. This benefits from the support of New York City Ballet and grants from the Annenberg Foundation and the ASCAP Foundation.

The school is sensitive to the needs of the student and all teachers are alert to subtle changes in behavior and performance. There is strong support available and solid systems to ensure that appropriate support moves into place.

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 outstanding.

The school's planning systems at all levels guarantee that every student achieves his or her best. There are tight structures and plans to make sure that all involved have the chance to stand back at regular points throughout the year, assess progress and make changes to maintain the highest standards throughout. The school's development plan is very well constructed and is a living document. It is regularly reviewed and interim targets assessed. The school's progress as a result is clearly visible to all.

The same high standards apply within the classroom. Teachers have regular opportunities to stand back and review the progress of the whole class and of individuals. Records show clearly that administration reviews the individual progress of each student and follows up both when there is a concern and when there has been accelerated development. The coaches work with teachers to ask good questions about the achievement of student goals and as a result, the professional discussions around student achievement have great integrity and impact on lesson design. The same applies to each student. This rhythm of requiring excellence, setting high goals for improvement, measuring success in an objective way purrs along keeping the school and all members of its community on track to achieve the highest standards of excellence. The school has an understated brilliance. High performance is achieved without motivational award systems and endless extra tutorials. Instead, it is achieved by a meticulous systematic delivery of excellence.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SCHOOL NAME: The Sarah Anderson School | Δ | ▷ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
| Quality Score | | | | | 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 | |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 1 | | | | | 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 |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 2 | | | | | 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 |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 3 | | | | | X |

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.

| To what extent does the school . . . | Δ | ➤ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
|--|---|---|---|---|----------|
| 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 |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 4 | | | | | X |

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.

| To what extent do . . . | Δ | ➤ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
|---|---|---|---|---|----------|
| 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 |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 5 | | | | | X |

| | |
|---|--|
| ◇ | Outstanding |
| + | Well Developed |
| ✓ | Proficient |
| ➤ | Underdeveloped with Proficient Features |
| Δ | Underdeveloped |