



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Roosevelt Island School**

**Elementary-Middle School 217**

**645 Main Street  
New York  
NY 10044**

**Principal: Mandana Beckman**

**Dates of review: April 2 - 3, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Florence Olajide**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Roosevelt Island School is an elementary-middle school with 451 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 38% Black, 23% Hispanic, 16% White, and 22% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 29% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 93.2%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school has a transient population due to families that work for the permanent mission to the United Nations.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and the administration team promote a strong collaborative culture in which all members of the school community feel valued and welcome.
- The school has a clear agenda for improvement and ensures that staff, students and parents have a strong awareness of its vision.
- The school has very effective systems for collecting reliable data on students' progress.
- The school makes good use of data to provide appropriate support for special education students.
- Professional development activities have been very effective in developing teachers' understanding of the data and their ability to use it well to inform their practice.
- The school conveys high expectations to students, and to their parents, and caregivers.
- Extremely positive relationships underpin the exceptional quality of personal and academic support that staff provide for students.
- The learning environment is very well ordered and consistent routines help students to settle down and focus quickly on learning.
- Very strong partnerships with a number of outside agencies are used to good effect to enrich the curriculum and promote students' enjoyment of learning.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further develop data analysis to ensure that staff have a stronger awareness of the differences in the performance of ethnic groups.
- Devise a consistent school-wide approach to ensuring that whole school goals translate into measurable goals for individual students, classes and grades.
- Ensure that plans for achieving the set goals contain clear timeframes.
- Continue to improve differentiation so that teachers match work more closely to students' needs and abilities.

## 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 well developed.**

The principal, administration team and staff are fully committed to providing students with a high quality educational experience and this has resulted in significant improvements over the last year. Excellent relationships throughout the school have helped to provide a caring learning environment where everyone works together as a strong team to improve outcomes for students. The school has used the outcomes of the previous Quality Review as a key driver for change. It collects a variety of data and uses this effectively to decide on the best provision to meet each student's needs. It underpins this process with very good professional development.

The school conveys high expectations of learning, behavior and conduct to students, parents and caregivers and this promotes a very well ordered learning environment. Parents are complimentary about the dedication and commitment shown by staff in providing their children with high quality care and support. Students echo their views and as one explained, 'They (staff) take their time to help you with any problem'.

Since the last Quality Review, the school has shared the principal's vision and goals with all members of the school community resulting in a strong awareness of what the school is trying to achieve. The whole-school goals defined for this year are measurable and reflect the school's data. However, systems for translating them into goals for individual students, classes and grades lack consistency, and action plans do not contain clear timeframes for implementation. The quality of instruction is better because of the school's efforts to improve differentiation. Nonetheless, this is still work in progress.

Very strong partnerships with a number of outside agencies are used to good effect to enrich the curriculum and promote students' enjoyment of learning. The work of the inquiry team is helping staff to develop a better understanding of the differences in the performance of gender groups throughout the school. Work has already begun to address the discrepancies in students' performance. However, the school has not given the same attention to the differences in the performance of ethnic groups.

A significant investment in new books and timetabled class use of the library is helping to support the school's goal of improving students' performance in English language arts. The school has begun to track its data against previous performance. Cross-grade meetings have helped staff to develop a good understanding of performance across the school and the implications for instruction in each grade. The school regularly revises its plans and goals based on emerging data and this is helping to accelerate the progress students make.

## **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 proficient.**

The school has established robust systems for collecting a wide range of data on students' performance. There are strong systems in place to ensure the reliability of this data. The data collected covers the performance and progress of individual students and is broken down into grade and class levels. As a result, leaders have a clear overview of students' performance and progress throughout the school. For example, the school's very thorough analysis of the data pertaining to special education students revealed differences in the performance of boys and girls within the group. The school has since used this information to modify provision to meet the needs of boys in special education more effectively.

While the work of the inquiry team has focused on the performance of gender groups, the school is not sufficiently aware of the discrepancies in the performance of ethnic groups. This is because it does not yet gather or analyze the data thoroughly enough to establish why some ethnic groups perform less well than others do. Nonetheless, the school effectively disseminates the data it does collect to all teachers and this forms the basis of professional development discussions. Teachers also use the data to inform planning and to determine which students require additional support. Staff are well trained on how to interpret and use assessment data. The school has begun to monitor its performance against that of similar schools.

**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.**

All the staff have been involved in discussions which have led to the formulation of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan. Parent representatives on the leadership team, play an active role in devising and reviewing the school's improvement plans. The school has effectively deployed a range of strategies to inform the wider community of the school's goals. For example, bulletin boards around the school include documents setting out the school's goals for the year. However, the school does not yet have systems in place to ensure that whole school goals consistently translate into measurable goals for individual students, classes and grades. There is a school-wide practice of encouraging students to set personal improvement goals. Some teachers share the cumulative class performance of the previous year with students and set whole-class goals for the end of the current academic year. Others go one-step further by ensuring that students understand their individual progress in relation to both past performance and their end of year goals. However, this good practice is not evident in all grades and there are inconsistencies in practice across the whole school. The school employs very effective systems to ensure that students and parents have a very good understanding of the school's expectations as regards students' conduct and attitudes to learning. Parents sign an expectations document at the start of the school year, which

spells these out. Students know and accept them, and the parents uphold and respect them. Parents are pleased with the quality and quantity of information offered about students' progress and are particularly impressed by the school's willingness to discuss students at any time.

The inquiry team is focusing on a group whose performance has been declining over time. It has set clear goals for the focus students. The team meets regularly to review the students' performance data and to check their progress. It is clear that these students are already making good progress, because of the constant review of performance and the continuous feedback to teachers, which enables them to modify their instruction in order to accelerate students' progress.

**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.**

There is a very positive climate in the school and students feel that they are well cared for, respected members of the community. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and promote an environment of trust. This inspires students to want to do their best and they appreciate and take full advantage of the numerous opportunities staff provide to help them catch up on or improve their work. They rise to the high expectations of behavior that staff have of them and this helps to maintain a very calm and orderly environment. Teachers use data well to make decisions about curricular approaches that might better suit students' needs. The school is making good use of the recent focus on partnership and small group work among students to address specific gaps in their reading skills. The establishment of book baskets in each class, with genre that are particularly attractive to boys, is helping to increase their interest in reading. The latter is a response to the data collected about the performance of boys, particularly those in special education. The school values the cultural diversity of its population and uses this to enhance the curriculum by promoting better cultural awareness among students. The successful enrichment program provides students with access to interesting activities such as community service, band, media, sports and a Saturday math academy

Leaders have effective systems for holding teachers accountable for the quality of their instruction. These include reviews of data analysis submitted by teachers as well as professional discussions about how to use the data to move students on to the next stage in their learning. The school continues to work on improving the match of learning activities to students' needs particularly in the light of several new staff joining the school this year. Nonetheless, the school has not yet achieved consistently high quality instruction. The budget is managed well to ensure that there are enough well-trained teachers and appropriate learning resources. The school successfully promotes good attendance and punctuality and both have improved significantly in the last year.

**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 school attaches great importance to professional development and is using it very effectively to develop its capacity to improve. The administration team observes classroom instruction frequently and has a good understanding of teachers' strengths. It has mapped out a plan to address any weaknesses. The school develops professional development activities based on the issues identified through data analysis as well as from first hand evidence from classroom observations. Staff have access to support from external consultants, coaches and Teachers College workshops. Their participation in professional development on literacy and differentiated instruction is helping to improve instructional practice in this area. To maximize the impact of professional development activities, staff who attend training activities produce a summary write up of their learning, and administrators are currently considering how to collate this information and share it more widely among staff.

The positive relationships mean that staff are comfortable with informal intervisitation. They are enthusiastic about learning from each other and take good advantage of opportunities such as the common planning time. The school holds grade meetings in different classrooms in order to give teachers a flavor of the practice of other colleagues. There are well-established systems to support the induction of new teachers who praise the very good support they receive from their mentors and other colleagues. The school fosters very positive partnerships with a number of outside entities and uses these relationships to enhance students' personal and academic development. These include after school and enrichment activities, and workshops designed to promote confidence and self-awareness among middle school students. To improve the quality of instruction, the school has established a set of expectations for instructional practice and classroom organization. Teachers are implementing these consistently and this is having a positive impact on learning.

**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 has a strong sense of purpose and direction focused on improving the performance of most groups of students. All members of the school community, including students and parents, understand and welcome this. The administration team acts as a powerful change agent and students, staff and parents recognize their effectiveness. Other staff and parents have good opportunities to contribute to and influence decision-making. Nonetheless, while the school has clear and measurable improvement goals for each year, the action plans do not include clear enough timeframes to support the completion of activities within the year.

Based on its data analysis, the school monitors and revises its plans throughout the year. Consequently, intervention and teaching groups change frequently to take account of students' progress, strengths and weaknesses in different subjects. The school takes strategic decisions, such as engaging the services of external consultants for the first time, in order to support the specific professional development needs of individual teachers. Where periodic data has shown anomalies, the administration is quick to implement steps to ensure that students continue to make good progress. It is clear that the outcomes of last year's assessment data and the Quality Review have driven the school's priorities for this year and the school is well poised to continue its improvement journey.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Roosevelt Island School</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>