



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Children's Workshop School

Elementary School 361

**610 East 12 Street
New York
NY 10009**

Principal: Maria Velez-Clarke

Dates of review: October 29 - 30, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Louise Kapner

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Children's Workshop School is an elementary school with 246 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 14% Black, 35% Hispanic, 39% White, 10% Asian students and 2% American Indian or Alaskan. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006–2007 is 91.7%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Children's Workshop School, a non-zoned school located in District 1, has approximately 30% of its students travelling from Brooklyn to attend. Two schools, a pre-kindergarten through grade 5 school and a District 75 school, share space with Children's Workshop School. The school is part of the Integrated Curriculum and Instruction learning support organization.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is highly self-reflective and focused on moving the school forward to improve student outcomes.
- The school's review of data pays close attention to individual students, special education students, and whole school performance and progress.
- Good procedures, understood by all, ensure that the school runs smoothly.
- The principal, staff, parents and students encourage a feeling of community resulting in a nurturing environment.
- The principal holds teachers accountable to ensure students' needs are met.
- Extremely effective partnerships provide students with opportunities to participate in enrichment activities.
- Parents are essential members of the school community and are highly knowledgeable of programs and their child's progress.
- The school budgeting and scheduling is reflective of the school's goals.
- Professional development is an integral part of the school program to enhance teachers' skills.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on the work in data collection to further analyze information relative to the performance and progress of student subgroups and English language learners.
- Refine and standardize the teachers' data collection systems to ensure ongoing monitoring of student performance and progress.
- Develop school-wide instructional and grading rubrics, and a congruent grading system, to provide students and parents with clear expectations in student work.

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 proficient.

Children's Workshop School seeks to provide an enriched academic program in a small, nurturing environment. Parents are essential members of the school community and are exceedingly supportive. The principal and her staff know their students very well and make every effort to provide each one with suitable academic and emotional support to maximize their performance and progress. Though the school's collection of authentic student work is at a high level, the school does not currently have a standardized system for collecting and recording ongoing assessment results to guide instruction. The review of standardized test results centers on individuals and school-wide, but monitoring of performance and progress is not to the same high quality for all student subgroups. Data is used very well to match instruction to the needs of the special education students.

The teachers mirror the high degree of collaboration in which the principal works with her staff. They engage in ongoing meetings and conversations to focus on goals to improve student outcomes. The inquiry team meets weekly and is focusing on students in grades 3 through 5 who showed a drop in performance on the math standardized tests. Professional development opportunities enable staff to further develop their skills. Teachers approach their craft with a strong determination and commitment to providing students with an engaging classroom experience. However, school-wide rubrics are not evident in every class to enable consistent sharing of high expectations with students and parents.

The school is not complacent in its efforts to improve student outcomes. This year's goals indicate a high level of self-reflection and are addressing effectively each area noted in the school's last Quality Review. The school is continually monitoring and suitably revising its programs in response to data to ensure that students' needs are met.

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's review of students' results in all standardized assessments is used well to understand individual, grade and school performance. A wide-range of available and school generated information relative to the performance of special education students is collected, analyzed, and used well to guide instruction. However, the same level of data analysis is not evident for English language learners. The school does not have

established systems to disaggregate data by ethnic and gender groups. This year the school is administering assessments that are well matched to its curriculum. Analysis of these embedded tests identifies both strengths and weaknesses specific to each student's achievement and helps guide instruction. While teachers use school-generated data to know their students very well, at present there are not formalized school-wide structures in use to record this data. Teachers are in the process of developing a comprehensive assessment record system to monitor students' performance and progress. Yearly students' individual portfolios reflect high-quality authentic work. The school also maintains an extensive collection of students' work for their entire time in the school.

The school does a good job of measuring its present overall performance against its past results by student and grade. Inconsistencies in student performance, especially in the lower grades, highlighted the need to implement a scope and sequence in academic areas. The school is now using pacing calendars in all curriculum areas. However, the school does not compare class performance effectively. Additionally, the school does not completely review cohort data to monitor year-to-year growth of similar groups of students to identify specific areas of need. Three neighborhood schools with similar demographics provide the principal with a good level of comparison of her school's performance. She proudly shared that while the school placed second, the math scores were further ahead. The school is committed to developing systems and training teachers in the collection and use of data to improve student outcomes.

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 proficient.

The school knows its students well and reviews data to set interim- and long-term goals. As an outgrowth of detailed review of standardized student achievement this year's foci is on the expanded use of assessments to guide instruction in literacy and the implementation of a new math program with embedded formative tests to address the fall in students' performance. Regularly scheduled meetings between the teachers and the coaches facilitate a close review of ongoing student work and enable staff to do in-depth skills' analyses to revise plans as needed.

Students are part of their own and classroom goal setting. Some classrooms display instructional guidelines for students, but this is not consistent throughout the school. Teachers' comments on students' work provide clear expectations and further guidance to improve outcomes. However, grading is not congruent with the levels on the progress or report card. The school is highly effective in sharing school and students' goals with parents. Twice yearly parents and students participate in lengthy individual family conferences. A detailed progress report facilitates the conversation centered on their child's strengths and the year's academic and personal goals. One parent shared that the teacher "really knew my child." Parents are encouraged to contribute goals for their own child. A classroom teacher distributes a parent questionnaire asking them share anything that will help her teach their child. An extensive array of workshops, invitations to celebrations, and curriculum night, further support a high level of parent participation.

The school focuses on providing relevant interventions for its students. Eligible students attend an early morning extended day program. Suitable materials and instruction by their classroom teacher provide a "great flow" and enable students to receive relevant academic support. Push-in and pullout programs during the school day allow specialists to provide differentiated interventions for those students in greatest need and to support flexible

grouping for instruction. A first-grader working one-on-one with the reading recovery teacher was highly engaged using manipulatives to learn letters. Running records and individual student conference notes are used well to monitor students' performance and progress. The review of data to differentiate instruction for English language learners is not at the same level.

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 proficient.

The school's standards-based curriculum is based upon meeting the needs of all students. Implementing TERC math in grades kindergarten through grade 4 was initiated after a careful review of last year's student outcomes on the standardized tests. This highly structured program provides a hands-on engaging approach to learning. Interim results from embedded unit assessments are under constant review to ensure instruction is well matched to students' needs. Staff members are held accountable for teaching and accelerating students' progress. The principal meets individually with each teacher to set out her non-negotiables. Specific dates are identified by which all teachers must complete initial student assessments used to differentiate classroom instruction. This year's introduction of the Teachers' College Reading and Writing assessments is supportive of improving differentiated instruction and students' literacy performance.

Due to its designation as a small school, the principal reviews data carefully to provide a clear framework for thoughtful decision-making about budgeting, staffing and scheduling. Students attend cross-graded classes in grades 1 and 2 and 3 and 4. Teachers voted via the school-based option to extend the school day from Monday through Thursday, enabling a half-day of professional development once each month. Common meeting time for all classroom teachers on Friday afternoons is devoted to discussing common needs of students. Grant awards, effective outside partnerships, and parents' fundraising well support the school's budget to provide extensive opportunities for students in arts education and social development programs.

High levels of respect result in a favorable learning environment. Upper-grade students are very proud to be reading buddies for pre-kindergarteners. The principal has recently implemented rewards for 100% attendance and punctuality on a monthly basis. Students call staff, including the principal, by their first name. Students know there are consequences should there be a fall in their behavior. When asked what they would change, one student quickly stated, "School should go to four o'clock instead of three."

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 "makes rounds" each morning and afternoon to look for evidence of good instruction and students engaged in meaningful learning activities. The formal observation process and individual teacher meetings provide additional opportunities to monitor instruction and provide feedback. Professional development is an integral part of the school's program. Participation is required of all staff and differentiated opportunities are provided according to teachers' needs. All teachers are learning how to collect and use

data to support students' achievement. They also attend training at Teachers College to support the schools implementation of new assessments aligned with their balanced literacy program. Selected teachers are participating in a "Schools Attuned" program to learn how to address learning styles of all students. Teachers are exceedingly dedicated and participate on their own time in professional activities centered on improving student outcomes.

The school has an established collaborative culture. Instructional team meetings, inter-school visitations, and voluntary weekly Monday after-school meetings support frequent exchanges of best practices. New teachers appreciate the benefit of mentoring by out-of-classroom specialists who model lessons and offer opportunities for professional discussions. Teachers are also very involved in supporting their students' developmentally. For those students with learning and or behavioral difficulties, teachers present relevant information at a meeting of the pupil personnel team. Student support-providers help identify suitable interventions and set established timeframes to revisit the recommendations. A highly effective partnership with the Manhattan Country School enables grade 4 students to spend a week on a farm. Student participation in various activities fosters emotional growth and helps students develop valuable responsibilities. Children's Workshop School is a very well run school. Teachers are well informed of school routines and instructional expectations. Classrooms display clear sets of rules and students are well aware of consequences for misbehavior.

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 proficient.

The principal is highly self-reflective and well-focused on using data to set interim- and long-term goals for her school, staff and students. Teachers meet frequently to review students' results from the literacy and math curriculum periodic assessments. The school's coaches are supportive of this effort. They use this information to realign goals and plans for individuals and groups of students. Teachers also make good use of data culled daily from running records and conference notes, to guide instruction. Quarterly progress and report cards provide an extensive review of students' work and progress. The principal meets monthly with each teacher to look at students' work and discuss her observations culled from daily learning walks. The principal sees this as the "only way I can give ongoing constructive feedback."

The upcoming yearly staff retreat will provide the entire school with an opportunity to work together to plan for this year's work. The principal is using last year's Quality Review and past and present school performance data to help guide the discussion to set measurable goals for this year, and timeframes within which to reach them. The principal recognizes the good work of her staff. She is very focused on helping them "work smart" by establishing formalized systems for collection of student information. The principal is clearly looking to the future and is implementing changes to ensure student success. Review of data showed the need for discreet grade 5 classes. As a result, students' performance has risen. The entire community is part of the change process. Staff were part of the self-evaluation prior to this Quality Review. The school leadership team meets monthly and is highly involved in discussing changes in school procedures. Yearly parent surveys encourage input from the school community. This year the Spanish program is expanded. The Comprehensive Education Plan is a formal guide to school policy and revised as needed.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Children's Workshop School	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, 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 student§				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?			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?				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		