



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Kathryn Phelan

**Elementary School 011
54-25 Skillman Avenue
Woodside
Queens
NY 11377**

Principal: Anna Efkarpidis

Dates of review: March 10 – 11, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Linda Hill

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Kathryn Phelan is an elementary school with 1192 students from kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 1% Black, 42% Hispanic, 15% White, and 42% Asian students. The student body includes 28% English language learners and 1% 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 was 94.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 69% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Staff, parents and students appreciate the commitment of the dynamic principal in leading the school highly effectively.
- The principal's vision for the school creates an atmosphere of trust and respect.
- The school uses data thoroughly and effectively to establish what it does well and what it needs to improve.
- The school leadership has a clear and unremitting focus on increasing progress for all students.
- The school uses collaborative practices to ensure high quality data analysis and associated outcomes for English language learners.
- Thoughtful and well-managed interventions lead to very good support for students who are falling behind with their work, enabling them to catch up.
- Exciting and informative visual displays help celebrate students' work and support their progress.
- Teachers differentiate instruction and resources effectively to take into account the needs of individual students.
- Guidance, pupil personnel and inquiry teams work collaboratively and coherently together to promote students' development in all areas.
- The school strives to include parents in promoting student progress and parents feel the school serves them extremely well.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that goal setting procedures are formalized so that agreed monitoring is consistently rigorous and effective.
- Find innovative ways to provide more physical education opportunities and to extend the enrichment program.
- Build on the good work to find ways to include even more parents in the full life of the school.

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.

Kathryn Phelan is a school that creates a family atmosphere of exceptional trust and respect. The principal's drive, role modeling and the clear school culture mean the school has made good progress since the previous Quality Review. It has extended the use of information technology to support classroom learning and increased the challenge provided for higher achieving students. The school has been less successful in developing a wider enrichment program including greater opportunity for physical education because of constraints of budget and space.

The school makes very good use of data to find out what it does well and what kind of well-researched interventions will help students succeed further. As it has an unremitting focus on individual students and what the data tells it about how they are doing, the school helps its students make good progress. The vast majority of students have a home language other than English and several are newly arrived in the school or the country, having missed chunks of their education. However, because of the school's excellent support, English language learners enjoy considerable success. Often, teachers use students' home languages to support their learning. As well as enabling lower achieving students to catch up, the school also strives, through careful support, to extend the progress of those who are already doing well.

Collaborative planning and support in an environment of a truly "open door" policy also enhance students' success rates. Guidance, student personnel and inquiry teams know their students thoroughly and provide well directed and effective interventions such as the Wilson program to tackle individual needs. Students are very appreciative of this level of support and say that their teachers "go out of their way to give extra help". Instruction is well planned, clearly differentiated, and incorporates a range of technologies and activities to appeal to a wider range of learners. Displays are excellent, visually stimulating and exciting, and frequently reflect what students have learnt, what they need to learn and how to do it. The school enjoys a high reputation in the community and parents are delighted with the school's support for their children, saying they are "proud" to have their children at Kathryn Phelan. The school needs to ensure even more parents are fully involved in the full range of activities offered.

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 school uses an extremely wide and effective range of data to provide good quality information about its students. As well as State testing and systems, such as ARIS, teachers understand the learning needs of their students through the running records, conferences and portfolios that they monitor constantly. Teachers' training in using the data tracking systems means that they now consider individual students very carefully when planning instruction. The school manipulates Acuity to provide precise information about specific cohorts, such as different ethnicities, or males working at Level 1, in order to map their progress and alter programs of support accordingly. Very robust data gathering and monitoring of all cohorts, including special education students, has enabled the school to identify its 17 students learning English for the inquiry team focus. Indeed, the understanding of the progress of English language learners is exemplary and they make very good progress as a result. Parents and students can also log into the Acuity system at home to track progress through a password-protected area, thus enabling better data understanding for all.

The principal has a good tracking system that enables her to see trends in data between classes and grades as students move through the school. This allows students' current and future class teachers to meet prior to the new academic year with effective information to discuss students' progress and needs and to plan accordingly. The inquiry and pupil personnel teams also jointly use the information provided to focus their work extremely appropriately. The school uses comparisons with other schools to find interventions to help it increase its own students' progress. Where a similar school has made gains using a particular reading program, the school has visited and gathered information to research the possible use with its own cohorts. Similarly, all kindergarten teachers visited another school to look at ways of improving students' writing skills to increase success.

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 uses a good range of formal and informal meetings to monitor and set goals. As well as common planning periods, monthly grade meetings review student progress and adapt plans. The school cabinet meets weekly to review wider goals and plan in a highly collaborative manner. However, because the school is truly collaborative with an extremely high level of trust, sometimes meeting members do not formally record the outcomes and next steps so that monitoring is not fully developed. Having carefully analyzed a wide range of data, including comparisons with other establishments, the school is aware of performance rates for all its cohorts; it not only knows that English language learners need to be the focus for its inquiry team, but that it is specifically their

decoding capabilities in reading that affect progress. The school employs a wide range of interventions to boost performance. Guidance and pupil personnel teams play a vital role in supporting those students most at risk with skilful screening leading to the right interventions such as speech therapy or work with families. The school regularly shares whole school goals with all members of its community, enabling them to feel part of the goal setting process. Parents received the school's quality review self-evaluation by email and all teachers have the opportunity to comment upon and feed into the Comprehensive Education Plan so that it properly reflects the high expectations of the whole school. Parents receive regular information about their children to keep them fully informed of progress. Aside from the formal monthly progress reports, parents receive weekly and sometimes daily updates from class teachers. Along with other opportunities provided, such as Saturday workshops and parental training, this represents high quality support for parents. The school recognizes the need to expand the numbers of parents who are fully proactive in return.

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 has worked hard to maintain its broad curriculum and out of hours activities to engage students and enhance their progress. However, a limited number of students participate and both parents and students would, rightly, like a wider range of trips, activities, arts, music and physical education. The school manages budgets and staffing well to support students' mandated goals and conducts a needs survey part way through the year to establish ongoing and new priorities to ensure continued success. As part of the school's constant reflection on its practice to provide the highest quality experience, it is currently considering different methods of delivering the curriculum. The school has such exemplary trust and respect amongst all its community, that teachers see accountability as a learning opportunity because, as one parent said, "they genuinely care about our children, inspire them, challenge and develop their character". Consequently, the daily walkthrough, frequent observations and performance reviews all contribute to establishing and maintaining a safe and stimulating learning environment. The principal thoroughly understands what she expects to see in classrooms and gives immediate feedback to teachers to make sure that students receive the instruction they deserve. The principal monitors displays and rubrics to check curriculum requirements are in place and this results in stunning visual displays in all areas of the school to enhance students' learning and pride in their work. Teaching is generally differentiated to meet students' needs well. The school effectively maintains high levels of attendance because students like coming to school.

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.

Professional development is extremely good because it matches with what the school needs to do in order to help students to progress rapidly. The school diligently

researches best practice and good commercial products that could be useful to individual students. Teachers complete surveys to identify their own training needs. New teachers receive very good induction and support and quickly understand the expectations of the school. Such processes mean that the school continues to develop good and effective teaching and maintains success for its students. The principal draws on her previous role as a professional development coordinator to model the process of self-reflection and, by receiving training in the very systems such as the Wilson reading program that she expects other teachers to use, she sets high expectations. A sensitive approach to model classrooms, where teachers can observe each other or coaches, is not restricted to learning only from the very best teachers. The approach ensures all have the opportunity to develop aspects of their practice and learn from one another in an open and trusting environment. Teachers also visit other schools to learn from them and develop skills that will provide their own students with an even better education. Weekly formal meetings with guidance teams also provide accurate information and good methods for teachers to support students sensitively and appropriately.

Effective procedures enable the school to run smoothly as everyone works as part of a fully developed team. The principal says that she could not manage without her custodians, or any of her staff, because they all contribute to the school's success.

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 constantly checks and adjusts its goals to improve student outcomes. Should a class not be on target to meet its goals against pacing calendars, the principal sets a one-week challenge for adjustments to occur. A full range of diagnostic measures provides a comprehensive picture of how well the school, cohorts, classes and individuals are doing so that plans and goals are revised accurately and effectively. The inquiry team meets weekly to review progress and there are clear checkpoints for whole school goals, usually in August, January and June to be certain that the school, classes and individuals are on track for success. However, because the process is so regular and embedded within the collaborative and trusting culture of the building, the school does not always minute procedures with recorded and measurable timeframes clearly enough so that monitoring occasionally lacks robustness.

Teachers review student progress on a daily basis, altering programs and finding different approaches to be certain that learning has taken place. Teachers regularly annotate planning books to show how they have adapted instruction according to need. Older students know their own goals and know how to improve as a result.

The principal's vision for the school, that it should provide a world class education with independent learners who know that "The choice is yours", is at the heart of everything that happens in the school. Parents, staff and students all share this vision and all feel privileged to be part of it.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Kathryn Phelan	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