



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Old South School**

**Elementary School 063**

**90 – 15 Sutter Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11417**

**Principal: Deidra Graulich**

**Dates of review: April 29, May 1- 2, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Ronnie Solow**

## Content of the report

### **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 Old South School is an elementary school with 1287 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Black, 51% Hispanic, 10% White, and 31% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 64% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The administration and teachers work collaboratively to provide effective instruction for all students based on goal setting activities.
- The school analyzes a wide range of data to determine the learning needs and evaluate progress of the students.
- Teachers' good use of data enables them to provide challenging and differentiated activities in the classrooms.
- Small groups of students receive effective intervention services resulting in improved performance outcomes.
- A wide range of art, music and dance classes supports the interdisciplinary core curriculum.
- Professional development is differentiated and results in teacher growth and skill development.
- Strong partnerships with academic institutions and community organizations support the school's mission.
- The school runs smoothly with quiet, well-organized and productive classroom environments.
- The school has a culture of trust and respect in which the students' academic, social and emotional development is well supported.
- School plans include measurable goals and timeframes resulting in good assessment of whole school progress.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to build on present strategies to minimize gaps in performance and progress between subgroups in the school.
- Refine the monitoring and revision processes by setting group-specific interim goals to measure group progress towards achieving long-term goals.
- Translate the parent handbook into appropriate languages to share high expectations and information with the whole school community.

## 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 Old South School serves a large, diverse student body in a warm, nurturing environment. The principal and her administrative team provide strong and knowledgeable leadership that advances the mission of the school. Teachers work harmoniously to develop exciting, challenging interdisciplinary units of study using the social studies standards as the basis for integrating all other areas of the core curriculum. Collaborative teams strategize, implement and revise instructional strategies based on a wide range of formal data, classroom assessment information, running records and student conferences. Teachers' good use of data enables them to effectively meet students' learning needs through differentiated classroom activities. A very wide range of art, music and dance classes support and enrich the interdisciplinary academic curriculum and provide many opportunities for creativity and self-expression

New computer-based assessments provide teachers with good additional information about the performance of their students. The inquiry team provides in-house training and support for the staff in the use of data-driven instruction. Teachers, parents and students make use of the information gathered from these online assessments. Acuity training illustrated for teachers how to use the system as a tool for pinpointing areas of need and support for classroom instructional activities. Other professional development based on skill, need and interest effectively supports the acquisition and refinement of best teaching practices. Data analysis shows that achievement gaps exist between subgroups in the school. Current strategies to minimize these gaps are being expanded. The school anticipates that by establishing group-specific interim goals, they will be better able to monitor progress towards achievement of their long-term goals. Parents are welcomed into the school and many serve daily as school volunteers. The school does not do enough to ensure that all its parents receive information in languages appropriate for its diverse community.

The school has made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement from the last Quality Review. Effective systems for monitoring attendance and lateness are in place. Additional interdisciplinary units with supporting materials, supplies and books are in the classrooms. Students engage in self- and peer-assessment activities, as well as goal-setting conferences in the core subjects with their teacher.

The inquiry team is studying 19 special education students who scored well below grade level expectations on the grade 3 State English language arts exam. Intensive, individually designed interventions have produced significant growth as measured by several different assessments. The students now report that they feel motivated and self-confident in their ability to learn.

## **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 a variety of formal and classroom data to understand the progress of the whole school, grades, classes and individual students. Close analyses of State exams in English language arts and math provide a longitudinal picture of the school's progress for the past several years, indicating performance gaps between subgroups in the school. The school is examining strategies to minimize these disparities and reduce the performance outcome gaps. Effective analysis of data by gender, ethnicity, for special education students and English language learners, enables the determination of student strengths and weaknesses and assessment of progress towards attainment of goals. The gathered data serves as the basis for the flexible, needs-based instructional groups that serve the students well. Special education students and English language learners receive effective instruction, based on the data, in well-executed programs.

The administration meets individually with every teacher each time new data becomes available and discusses the outcomes in terms of implications on teaching and learning. Each teacher selects six lower-performing students as a focus for improvement and intensive interventions for the year, resulting in improved outcomes for these targeted groups. Analysis of all class information determines needs, trends and results in improved student performance. The principal makes effective comparisons with schools in her peer horizon, network and neighborhood schools. A comparison of data from these schools informs her decision-making process and shows that the school is continuing its good academic progress.

**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.**

Collaborative planning and goal-setting activities support teacher and administrator teams with school improvement planning. Common planning periods for each grade, along with professional development, effectively assist the teachers in developing high-quality interdisciplinary lessons and materials for each unit of study. School-based coaches and consultants collaborate with teachers in creating activities that align well with the curriculum maps and pacing calendars. Students identified as being at risk for failure receive targeted intensive intervention services during the school day, further supported by extended day, Saturday and holiday school programs. All classes in grades 3 through 5 have an additional teacher during the reading period so that the teacher to student ratio is reduced, resulting in more intensive instruction. All intervention services, monitored weekly by the child study team, target the needs of the individual students through specific planning and timely revisions when determined by need. Higher-achieving students have additional challenging academic opportunities in class and after school to prevent slippage to lower levels of performance. One fifth

grade class, homogeneously grouped according to higher performance levels, strives for even higher achievement levels through a specifically designed rigorous and challenging educational program.

Regularly scheduled meetings and other formal channels, such as report cards, orientation sessions and parent association meetings, keep parents informed about school information. However, at this time, the school's ability to share all information with the entire parent body is not fully developed. The parent handbook is not translated into languages appropriate for the very diverse community served by the school in order to keep them well informed about the school's goals and other information. This results in a group of parents not having full knowledge of their child's educational program.

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

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

The school's broad, engaging interdisciplinary curriculum follows the required City and State guidelines. The balanced literacy program uses leveled libraries, well supplemented by commercial programs, to provide good data about student progress towards achievement of learning goals. Everyday Math also provides high-quality instructional strategies and useful data for teachers regarding progress in math. Classroom information, utilized in conjunction with the data from interim and predictive tests, carefully aligns the instructional strategy lessons to the curriculum maps and pacing calendars. Science, social studies, physical education, health and technology study also incorporate best teaching practices and round out the instructional program. A broad offering of art, vocal and instrumental music, and dance classes supports the academic curriculum and provides many rich opportunities for creativity and self-expression. Classrooms and halls, beautifully decorated with student work, exhibit evidence of the high expectations and the broad, motivating curriculum. Students, busily engaged in their lessons, quietly transition from activity to activity and eagerly assist one another, thereby exhibiting the traits of mutual respect and trust for one another.

Budget, staffing and hiring decisions effectively address the needs of the students as indicated by the data. Additional teaching staff enables reduced class size ratios in kindergarten through grade 3, providing more teacher contact time for each student. Academic intervention services, provided by full-time and part-time staff, enable students to receive necessary assistive help. Ample supplies, materials and books in all classes support the rigorous interdisciplinary units of study. Good systems to monitor and record attendance and lateness are in effect. The rate of attendance is currently 94%.

**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 professional development action plan grows out of the observed needs of the staff, school-wide data and the results of a teacher survey. The administration, coaches and

mentor teachers visit classes daily, observing the teaching and learning process, and providing high-quality feedback in a timely fashion. Teachers regularly visit one another's classrooms, providing collegial support and suggestions resulting in the sharing of best practices. New teachers meet with their mentors and assistant principals in a program that effectively addresses their particular needs. Student teachers, included in all professional development activities, develop good teaching skills and are hired by the school when a vacancy occurs. Senior staff willingly share their skills and expertise with less experienced colleagues, thereby expanding the leadership capacity in the school. Consultants provide customized professional development in literacy strategies, the targeted area for the school. Common planning time and other scheduled meetings provide effective opportunities for analyzing data, self-evaluation and reflection on instructional practices. Attendance at professional development activities outside of school are encouraged and supported by the principal. The information, shared at subsequent meetings, is made available to all at the school.

Many excellent partnerships with cultural, social and academic institutions provide opportunities for support of the social, emotional and academic development of the students, parents and staff. Rules and regulations are well known and followed by all resulting in a calm, orderly learning environment.

**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 principal's objectives contain measurable goals for school improvement with a timetable for checking progress towards goal attainment. The administrative team and the teaching staff review the formal and informal data sources, information from the child study team and attendance figures on a regular basis to determine the need for revisions and adjustments to the strategic action plans. The good systems that monitor success and evaluate progress towards goal achievement result in collaborative planning and effective staff buy-in for the whole school's achievement goals. Recognition of the gaps in achievement between subgroups is not currently included in the school's strategic planning process. This makes it difficult for the school to monitor the progress of each subgroup.

Effective analysis of data from each class, grade and subject area provides evidence regarding whole school progress and needs. Revisions, swiftly enacted when the data indicates the need for mid-course correction, align with the interdisciplinary curriculum maps and pacing calendars. Spring planning becomes an effective mechanism for examining yearly outcomes, reflecting on discerned needs and incorporating the information into the planning process for the coming academic year. Springtime analysis of data results in the teachers' knowledge of their needs for the coming year.

The principal envisions her students as "successful readers, writers and mathematicians who succeed with life-long learning skills." All are working to achieve that end.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Old South 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.**

<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .</b>	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.**

<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .</b>	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.**

<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	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>