



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Forest Park School

Elementary School 97

**85 Street
Queens
NY 11421**

Principal: Maureen Ingram

Dates of review: April 4 - 6, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Gareth Williams

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Forest Park is an elementary school with 722 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 70% Hispanic, 4% White, and 23% Asian students. The student body includes 25.8% English language learners and 6.2% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 94%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 86% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and her cabinet work highly effectively in order to bring about change.
- The school has developed rigorous systems for collecting and analyzing data which is used to set goals for grades, classes and subjects.
- The school regularly reflects on its work and adjusts goals when necessary to ensure that all students achieve as well as possible.
- The broad and enriched curriculum enhances learning and offers many opportunities for students to excel.
- Students and teachers get along very well together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Partnerships with outside entities are very good and greatly benefit the students.
- Professional development planning aligns well with school goals and helps teachers to match work well to the needs of their students.
- Parents are well informed of their children's progress and achievement and value highly the school activities that support this.
- Classroom observations are effectively linked with professional development for teachers.
- Teachers are reflective practitioners who support and learn from each other and highly effective induction procedures ensure that new staff settle in quickly.

What the school needs to improve

- Review systems on the collection, collation and presentation of data in order to make it more user-friendly to all stakeholders.
- Refine school structures to enable all staff to use and manipulate data to discuss sub-group performance in grade and faculty teams.
- Improve the consistent use of rubrics to develop student self assessment.
- Build on current classroom observations to support teachers to take differentiation to the next level.

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.

Forest Park is an effective data driven school. It has made good progress since the previous Quality Review. The school is successful because it is well led. The principal and her cabinet give clear direction to the work of the school, and are effective in monitoring what it does. They keep the school moving forward by watching the impact of actions taken to meet goals and changing those actions as necessary. As a result there is a focus on the progress of each individual student. Parents speak very highly of the school and are pleased with the progress their children make. The students are provided with an expanded curriculum which enriches learning very well and enables them to excel, especially in the arts.

Students enjoy their learning and achieve well. They eagerly talk about how much they enjoy school and are particularly proud of the peer mediation systems that have been developed since the last review. They know their own goals and what they need to do to achieve them. Student behavior is good because the principal, teachers and parents are fully involved in setting consistently high expectations. Students know the consequences of their actions, in the words of one, "We all seem to get along at this school and there is very little bullying."

Teachers collaborate well in order to achieve the school's vision and goals. The inquiry team has already had an impact on the school's work and has involved a range of staff in its study. The school has rightly focused on the underachievement of students in grade 4 scoring Level 1 in English language arts. Findings from this study have informed professional development opportunities for teachers. Teachers are appreciative of the way the current administration listens to them and takes account of their views. This has led to a school community with a united view of what needs to be done in their school in order to reach the goals that have been set.

Improvement since the last review has included gaining a greater understanding of where each student is in their learning through a more effective use of data. The cabinet has analyzed data along gender and ethnicity lines but the use of this data at grade and faculty level remains largely informal. Consequently, it is therefore not used to best effect. Similarly, while there is clear evidence of differentiation during many lessons, students do not always receive challenging enough work to allow learning to move on at a quick enough pace. This results in some students not always being sufficiently challenged in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

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 collects a wide variety of data which it then examines carefully to ensure that it is used to best effect. The school has an objective, up to date understanding of each student, class and grade. Data is used effectively to identify those students in danger of falling behind and extra instruction is organized for them. The school then makes sure that it tracks their progress closely. Much additional information is collected on the achievement of special education students and English language learners. Their individual needs are recognized and special support programs ensure maximum progress as for example in the implementation of the Wilson program.

The school keeps a close eye on the performance of ethnic groups and on males and females. However, this information is not always used to best effect by teachers across grades to analyze trends and patterns in performance. The principal knows every child personally and successfully endeavors to ensure that "children come first". Attention is paid to comparing the school's progress with those of similar schools and its own past performance. Where data shows that the school needs to make improvements it focuses particularly well on improving progress in these areas. As a result, the school now achieves well in comparison to its peer horizon.

Training in the use and manipulation of data has been good. The training received in Acuity has been particularly welcomed by teachers. Consequently, they feel more empowered than ever before to handle data appropriately to differentiate instruction and monitor the progress and achievement of students. The manageability of manipulating the quantity of data to best effect requires evaluating.

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.

Clear goals are identified for students, classes, grades and the whole school which have specific measures for improvement. The whole school community now contribute ideas to shape improving student performance. A high level of collaboration ensures that teachers plan together and set goals for the students. Goals are reviewed frequently, enabling teachers to check whether they have been achieved in the timeframe set. Consequently they are able to tweak or re-set goals accordingly. Rubrics are not yet used consistently to help students assess their own work and identify next learning steps and to set more challenging goals for higher achieving students.

Teachers provide students at risk of underachieving with extra help through a mixture of support and extra classes. For those students who need to make the most progress, small-step goals are identified in individual education plans. The use of data from the inquiry team has informed teacher understanding of the complex issues related to

moving low achieving students in their reading. Because the school recognizes the specific weaknesses of these students it plans very well for their needs and monitors their progress every step of the way.

Very clear expectations exist for students and their parents. For example, students listen carefully to the school pledge every day and learn that it is important to make the right choices in life. Goals and objectives are communicated well to parents. As a result, parents feel informed of their children's current goals.

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.

In English language arts and math, built in assessments effectively gauge progress towards goals. Good quality assessment binders are now well developed throughout the school. These are being passed onto the next grades to ensure that teachers are able to build upon what students already know. There are plans in place to continue to coach teachers to level work more accurately. The application and use of rubrics is not always consistent across grades. This can lead to inconsistency of expectation against the required State standards. Moreover, teacher understanding of what students need to do to make better progress and involve them more in the development of self-assessment strategies is a priority identified by the school in its own self evaluation. Data gathered on reading tests ensures differentiated reading groups are established so that reading books closely match the needs of each student. The school has yet to ensure the systematic and consistent analysis of this data to inform instruction that could support the school to improve achievement still further in this and other areas.

Teachers ensure that lessons are interesting and motivate the students to learn. Often, this is achieved by linking subjects together to make learning more meaningful. This is particularly the case in kindergarten classes where the development of cross-curricular learning through the implementation of the Core Knowledge program has taken off to a flying start. Staff engage students well in lessons and students are excited to talk about their work. There are good opportunities for students to participate in practical activities and games and to use manipulatives. The curriculum is good overall. An effective enrichment program delivers quality instruction during the school day to students in music, gym and computing. The quality of the art work in the school is excellent. Students and teachers get along very well together in an atmosphere of mutual respect. There are rigorous systems for monitoring students' attendance and tardiness which ensures they arrive on time and attend well. The school works hard in this area.

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.

Frequent class visitations by the principal mean teachers are held accountable for the progress students make. As a result, professional development is well targeted to

teacher development as and when required. Professional development is valued highly at the school. Inter-visitations are a key feature for personal development. Teachers are offered outside workshops as appropriate and participate in focus groups designed to discuss and modify instruction. There is an ongoing dialogue between teachers. Coaches and external consultants model instructional approaches to a high standard. Their support and guidance has been instrumental in the school's development over the past 12 months. Their inclusion within the cabinet represents wise strategic planning. The principal is not afraid to challenge weak instruction and organizes individualized support programs to aid improvement.

Teachers collaborate well together to improve their instruction. In the words of one teacher new to the profession, "I have learned so much by coming to this school and feel I can ask any member of staff for help." Induction procedures are good and support new staff to settle quickly into school routines. They are able to work with colleagues and attend courses to help them make a good start to their career.

All staff are aware of the need to develop the whole child and as a result the counselor and guidance team make sure that students stand the best possible chance of successfully reaching their personal goals. Their commitment to the children's welfare is high. Students' behavior and attitudes are good and the pride they have in their school clearly shines through. They value the increasing responsibilities allotted them through schemes such as peer mediation.

Visitors come in to school to work with groups of students. For example, the Fire Department worked with students and parents on fire safety. Students also benefit from a wide range of visits to places of interest.

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, administration and cabinet have a clear vision for the future of the school. They are passionate about giving every child every opportunity to learn and reach their potential. The strategic role of the cabinet is highly developed. They communicate the overall vision and strategic intents for the school, which has improved since the previous review, but grade teams and faculty do not consistently take ownership of data to maximize potential; particularly in areas related to analyzing data across ethnicity and gender lines.

Staff commitment to the vision is real. They work together collaboratively to improve their practice. New initiatives are readily welcomed. Teachers carefully track the progress that students make and change goals as necessary to ensure they all achieve as well as possible. The amount of data generated by the school however is substantial and poses real challenges for teachers in their ability to use it effectively. Highly-focused whole-school goals are consistently reviewed and adjusted as necessary as issues emerge or goals are reached. The school is in a very good position to make further improvements.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Forest Park School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide...	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty...	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

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

To what extent does the school...	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school...	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do...	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

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