



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Langston Hughes Elementary School**

**Elementary School 134**

**203- 06 109th Avenue**

**Queens**

**NY 11412**

**Principal: Cheryl E. Marmon-Halm**

**Dates of review: October 11 - 12, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Helen Donnellan**

## 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

Langston Hughes School is an elementary school with 484 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 88% Black, 8% Hispanic, 1% White and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 67% eligibility.

The school site adjoins a District 75 school site. The schools share some facilities and collaborate in activities.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principal work well as a unified collaborative team which provides clear leadership to the school.
- The administration makes clear their commitment to providing high quality instruction for all students.
- Extensive information is gathered and analyzed on all students and is now presented in easily understood formats.
- Where data is well used, instruction and support for individual students is well matched to the needs of groups and classes.
- The curriculum blends core subjects with performing and creative arts, to enrich learning opportunities.
- Students are happy at school and appreciate the range of subjects within the school curriculum.
- Staff collaborate and share their expertise, supporting their colleagues as they strive to improve instruction.
- The school promotes a safe and inclusive learning environment, which prepare students to play their part in an ever-changing world.
- Displays of work in classrooms and corridors celebrate student achievement and reinforce learning points effectively.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to increase the opportunities for teachers and students to apply technology in the delivery of instruction in all subjects.
- Explore ways of sharing students' monthly goals with their parents to make them more aware of what students are aiming for.
- Extend the opportunities for students to use different learning styles and approaches, including practical work.
- Develop the ways in which teachers record the progress of students in non-academic subjects.
- Further analyze special education students' performance data in order to effectively support their progress.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is well developed.**

The administration team's actions show their commitment to improvement and capacity to reflect and change. Progress and performance of all students can be seen in organized assessment binders, which contain extensive data on students, classes and grades. This information is used well to review performance and determine appropriate intervention strategies. The school is open about data on performance. Increased rigor in data analysis has helped the school to identify key differences in the performance of students. While, in many instances, data is used to match instruction with different individual student needs and learning styles this is not done consistently throughout the school. Students are active in their learning and aware of what they need to master in order to progress. They follow a balanced curriculum which integrates creative and performing arts and core subjects, allowing them to be successful in academic and creative subjects. The school is well equipped with technology, but this is currently under-used for instruction and learning. The staff work effectively with colleagues in the community to provide integrated support programs for students. The effect of interventions is systematically monitored to ensure that students continue to learn. The administration takes care to plan in detail and monitors and evaluates these plans throughout the year. Data is key to this cycle of ongoing improvement, ensuring that appropriate changes are made without undue delay.

Actions have been taken to address all the issues raised in the last review. Assessment binders now show student progress and variations between groups are more apparent as a result. Possible causes of variable performance between groups have been confirmed through data, triggering specific intervention intended to minimize differences in progress. The recently-established inquiry team is active and has already identified specific groups of students to research. Members of the inquiry team represent teachers and administration, and are well placed to share information with colleagues across the school. The team is noticeably excited about the information available from data, which bodes well for the impact of their work.

### 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.**

This is a school where staff have a clear picture of their students. Teachers' assessment binders contain all assessment data for their class. These binders are structured to make it easy to update records and access information. This approach is also applied not only at the whole school level but at class, grade and subject level. Records on all students are

collected and analyzed, including data on special education students and English language learners.

This system has highlighted that the progress made by special education students in academic subjects is insufficient to reduce the gap between their performance and that of general education students. This is a concern for the school and strategies are being explored to “close the gap”. While assessments record detailed progress in core subjects, recording of progress of special education students in other subjects does not give a full picture of their learning.

Test results are analyzed in detail to show which strands and aspects of subjects are strengths and which need to be developed. Results for all students are examined to identify areas to be targeted, which leads to students making good progress. The rigor in collecting and analyzing data has raised issues for the school which are currently being addressed. There are differences in performance results for boys and girls and between different ethnic groups. Focus groups of staff are examining tests, student work and instructional approaches to understand what lies behind these differences and identify effective options to overcome them. The outcome of this has yet to be seen. Comparing performance with other schools is not widely used to highlight strengths in subjects or grades.

**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.**

Data is an essential part of planning and goal-setting processes for all students. Staff use data to identify each student’s strengths and areas to develop and use this to form their learning goals. Individual goals are set and reviewed monthly, so students know what areas they need to improve. Students’ insights into what they are learning and why are further reinforced in each lesson as teachers point out the learning objectives for the lesson. Class teachers hold one-to-one conferences with every student monthly to discuss progress and identify the next goal, so students have regular feedback on their learning.

The school relies on students sharing these goals with their parents, rather than the school informing parents directly. This means that parents are often unaware of how work at home relates to the overall program for the year or term. The school works hard to involve parents and families with school life and encourages them to be partners in their children’s education. Parents are supportive of the school and want their children to do well, but many of them find it hard to play an active role in school life. Workshops and written communication are used to maintain contact with families and the parent coordinator works hard to create more effective ways of working with families.

All teachers receive collaborative planning time daily, when grade teams reflect on progress made by students, adapt their plans and share effective teaching and learning strategies. Teachers were given students’ previous year’s assessment information at the start of the new academic year to increase their knowledge of their students. This also avoided unnecessary duplication of testing for students at the start of the year and enabled teachers to base their plans on what the students can do.

Examining test results has led to changes in the curriculum as well as support for particular students. English language learners in lower grades now follow a specific oral language

program to develop their speaking and listening skills. The school is effective in supporting students at risk of failing tests and higher-achieving students, and is just as concerned about students who achieve borderline passes. Test papers are examined to identify weak subject areas and ineffective strategies, which has enabled intervention to be provided and has improved student performance.

**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 is rich in displays of student work, which celebrate learning and inspire other students. The curriculum allows all students to learn academic subjects and develop their skills in creative and performing arts, both during the school day and in after-school enrichment classes. Through the wide range of subjects, students develop holistically during their time at school and are helped to prepare for life as adults in a fast-changing world. In adaptive physical education classes, special education students develop number concepts, dance, music, social skills and motor control in fun and meaningful ways.

Some teachers are skilled at adapting their instruction to the needs of all students in their classes. Students find this exciting and like to be active in their learning. One student in such a class described this by saying, “Some lessons sizzle and children listen.” Where teachers are less responsive to the needs of students, less interest is shown and motivation to learn is reduced. This was reflected in the comment, “When it’s fun we want to do it. When they expect us to do it, it’s not fun – we just have to.” Whilst some classes are differentiated, this is not consistent across all the school. As a result, some students are not challenged sufficiently throughout their time at school.

The school has modern technology, but this is not fully used by teachers or students within classes. This results in students having limited opportunities to use computer skills and extend their knowledge through research.

The principal rigorously holds teachers to account through sharing data on performance, so that they see the impact of their instruction on students’ learning outcomes. The city’s formal processes for monitoring instruction are used to good effect and data is used equally well to hold teachers accountable for learning.

**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.**

This school is determined to improve its capacity to deliver effective instruction and improve learning for students. The members of the administration team see themselves as learners, giving a powerful example of ongoing professional learning to staff, students and parents. Professional development is shaped by needs shown through student data, outcomes of classroom observations and training needed to implement new initiatives. This leads to individualized development for staff. The administrators now have to demonstrate that training is making an impact on how or what teachers teach, which is adding to its positive impact.

Specific training and support is provided to newly-appointed staff, through mentors and observations of model lessons, to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the school's requirements. New teachers and their mentors meet as a group and individually to review the effectiveness of support and determine further support that may be needed.

The staff work closely with professionals from community-based organizations to deliver the broad curriculum effectively. This results in students receiving a unified approach to support them in making progress and achieving their goals. The Experience Corps has recently embarked on a partnership with the school, with a team of retired professionals supporting reading and mentoring students. The outcomes of this work are yet to be seen.

The school works well with the adjoining District 75 school, sharing expertise wherever possible and agreeing on common procedures as necessary. This minimizes the chances of confusion due to different procedures required of each school.

**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's priorities for the year are clearly defined in the principal's performance review goals. She breaks these down into specific actions, interim goals and plans to ensure that all staff are aware of the goals and what they mean for the way they work. Monitoring progress towards these goals is established within the school's routines, with data at the center of this. However, data is not accepted at face value. Staff compare formal test scores against teachers' records and analyze overall scores to verify test results and identify inconsistencies.

The principal shares her positive attitude towards data and values the objective information it provides for monitoring. Data is scrutinized in detail and staff are now beginning to see patterns and trends in data and use this to adjust their plans.

The administration encourages staff to reflect on all their work as the first stage in more formal cycles of planning, monitoring and review. This also reflects the commitment to the city's Quality Review process, from carrying out the self-evaluation to taking action to address issues raised. This approach enables school leaders to query and challenge, using data as the basis for her initial questions to probe beyond the statistics. Staff respond well to this approach and work together to resolve concerns and put alternative plans into place. These plans may include different delivery of instruction in classes, changes of teacher to student allocation and activities to develop students' thinking skills.

The school mission and vision emphasize the importance of developing the whole child, rather than a restricted focus on academic results. In practice, this has led to students making good progress and developing a range of skills and talents. The principal has a very positive attitude toward data and values the objective information it provides for monitoring.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Langston Hughes School (PS 134)</b>	△	▶	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

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

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

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				X	

<b>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>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▶</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				<b>X</b>	

<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?				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>				<b>X</b>	

<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 make 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>				<b>X</b>	