



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Clearview Gardens School**

**Elementary School 209**

**16 – 10 Utopia Parkway  
Queens  
NY 11357**

**Principal: Dr Mary E McDonnell**

**Dates of review: November 26 - 27, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Glynis Bradley-Peat**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Clearview Gardens is an elementary school with 535 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 12% Hispanic, 46% White, and 40% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 95.8%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is a highly dedicated and committed individual who facilitates very effective team-work in order to bring about change.
- Partnerships with outside entities are 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.
- Teachers make learning interesting and fun so that students participate fully in their lessons.
- Leaders evaluate whole school goals frequently and make strategic changes regularly which drives forward successful school improvement.
- The school shares its vision and goals very well with parents which facilitates good communication.
- Excellent systems and procedures ensure that school is safe, providing an atmosphere where students learn.
- Teachers are very eager to collaborate and share their ideas in an atmosphere of professional reflection which ensures instruction is constantly improved.
- Students have the opportunity to participate in sports and other enrichment activities both during and after school which enhances learning.
- Teachers use data very effectively to support the progress of special education students and English language learners.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure core curricular approaches provide portfolios of leveled work for teachers and students.
- Provide better access to school data through more training and effective use of technology.
- Consider ways of ensuring that art is taught more regularly in an otherwise broad curriculum.

## 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 school has worked well to address the identified areas for improvement since the last review. It has made good progress because it has prioritized the issues and dealt with them in an organized way. There is now an efficient school-wide data reporting system and staff are receiving training to use Acuity. Additionally, data is collected from a wide range of sources including gains reports, Acuity, conference notes, progress reports, environment surveys and many of the school's own assessments. This is analyzed well and trends and patterns noted. Because the process is systematic it is very good at spotting those students in need of extra support and help. It is also effective at ensuring effective interventions are used to maximize the progress of English language learners and special education students.

The work of the inquiry team is excellent and has identified a group of grade 5 students whose proficiency rating declined between grade 3 and 4 in English language arts. Data is used effectively and is frequently reviewed, interim goals set and next steps identified. Professional development has also been put in place for teachers so as to bring about a real shift from instruction to learning. Development is also slated to provide teachers with more training in the use of technology for data analysis.

The core curriculum is well organized and is continually revisited to make sure that students do as well as they possibly can. Good cross-curricular working patterns can be seen in many areas of the school. Good links exist between computer studies literacy, social studies and math. Enrichment includes computer skills, music, and gym but only limited access to any artistic activities.

The dedicated work of the principal has efficiently effected change through excellent teamwork with administrators and all staff. Students behave extremely well because they enjoy attending school. In the words of one, "We enjoy school because teachers are kind and help us to learn." Teachers enjoy attending the school too and praise the work of the principal highly. They say, "She has a great perspective on how to do things. Morale is high because she is so appreciative of both staff and students." Goals are clear to the whole school community which enables everyone to pull together to achieve them.

## **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 follows 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. For example, "learning leaders" work closely with the students and progress is tracked through individualized student charts which indicate goals and time limits.

The school keeps a close eye on the performance of ethnic groups even though some groups are very small. The principal knows every child personally and successfully endeavors to ensure that "no child is left behind". Attention is paid to comparing the school's progress with those of similar schools and its own past performance. The data showed that the school needed to make improvements in English language arts so it focused particularly on improving progress in this area. As a result, the school now achieves well in comparison to its peer horizon. Although the computer cluster teacher helps teachers with data analysis, the school has rightly identified the need to improve the ease of data access for all staff through training and more effective use of technology.

**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 trends are identified across students, classes, grades and the whole school which enables the school to set specific and measurable goals for improvement. The recommendations from the last Quality Review are encompassed in the new Comprehensive Education Plan towards which all members of the school community are invited to contribute their ideas. A high level of collaboration ensures that teachers plan together and set goals for the students. Because goals are reviewed frequently, teachers are able to check whether they have been achieved in the timeframe set. Consequently they are able to modify or re-set goals accordingly.

Those students who are at risk of underachieving are given 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. 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.

Expectations are made very clear to students and their parents. For example, students listen carefully to the moral message for the day and learn that it is important to make the right choices in life. High expectations are also conveyed to staff who are expected to lead by example. Parents say that goals and objectives are communicated to them well and that they are involved in supporting these at home. The school knows that this is a key factor in establishing trust between parents and educators and contributes to the school's success. Parents are trained as "learning leaders" to help in classrooms.

**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 and running records gauge progress towards goals. Good quality assessment binders are passed between grades to ensure that teachers are able to build upon what students already know. However, the school has rightly recognized that it needs to continue to train teachers to level work more accurately. These can then be used by staff and students so that progress can be mapped more precisely. More effective rubrics are in the process of being developed so that both instruction and learning can be improved further.

Teachers ensure that lessons are interesting and motivate the students to learn. Often, this is done by linking subjects together to make learning more meaningful. For example, a social studies lesson about the Mayan calendar taught students a new counting system and sharpened their note taking skills. Students engaged very well with these activities and were excited to talk about their work. There are good opportunities for students to participate in practical hands on activities and games and to use manipulatives. For example, in math, students excitedly estimated which objects in the classroom might be 10cm long and to justify their choices they set to work measuring. Students spoke about playing games in math and said, "They're fun but they teach you at the same time." Data gathered on reading tests ensures differentiated reading groups are established so that reading books closely match the needs of each student. It also makes sure that it updates this data regularly. Although the curriculum is broad, there are insufficient opportunities for students to be instructed in and to enjoy art.

There is a routine of class visitations by the principal and teachers are held accountable for the progress students make and know their responsibilities. To achieve this she meets with teachers regularly to discuss the data and talk about how well students are doing. Students and teachers all get on very well together in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Students know what is expected of them and say, "The school expects us to do our best." "Morning words of wisdom" set the tone for the day. There are rigorous systems in place to keep a close eye on student's attendance and tardiness which ensures they arrive on time and attend well.

An effective enrichment program delivers high quality instruction during the school day to students in music, gym and computing. Visitors come in to school to work with groups of students. For example, authors created books and the fire department worked with students on fire safety. Students also benefit from a wide range of visits to places of interest. Extracurricular activities offer opportunities to take part in basketball, chorus, band and cheerleading.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

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

The principal has provided high quality training for her staff through the very good links she has developed with outside entities. The program of professional development aligns well with the school's priorities for improvement. Professional development links carefully with the weaknesses identified in pupils' skills. New teachers are made to feel welcome and are given good support and help which helps them adjust to the school's expectations quickly. Regular walkthroughs and formal visitations have enabled the principal to pin point exactly what staff need to improve their practice. For example, a new goal set recently has identified higher order questioning as an area for improvement.

Teachers make the best use of the many opportunities to collaborate with each other and they meet regularly to share ideas and plan together in teams. Meetings are of high quality and focus efficiently on the school's development priorities. Teachers value the chance to discuss issues together and to formulate plans to tackle concerns. The principal and administration have ensured that the school runs smoothly and effectively by implementing very clear and effective systems. As a result the school is a model of excellent behavior. Parents are highly complementary about the way the school is run on a day to day basis and quite rightly so. Consistently enforced procedures ensure that school is a place of security and safety.

**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 and all staff know, and are committed to, the vision for the school. It is shared very well with parents and the rest of the whole school community. The key to the school's success is highly effective teamwork which brings about change with the full support of all staff. Administrators support the principal well and have produced good quality improvement plans with well identified long-term goals. Plans include clearly identify interim goals. This results in revision of long-term goals if necessary. Periodic assessments are used very well, along with other data, to plan for further development. Instruction is modified as a result of data analysis. For example, teachers are aligning instruction to the learning styles of their students. The monitoring of student progress has also meant that planning for differentiation has been improved. For example, teachers effect differentiation now in a number of different ways but are particularly adept at differentiating questioning and tasks. Detailed tracking of the performance of students ensures that school leaders know how well students are achieving. This information is then used to make sure that progress is maintained. The school makes tremendous efforts to ensure that those students in greatest need of improvement get all the help and support that they need. Additionally, it also focuses on those students who require a high level of challenge so that the proportions reaching Level 4 grow.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Clearview Gardens 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 student's 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		
<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 . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
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	

**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?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

**Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

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