



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

John Greenleaf Whittier

Elementary School 018

**221 Broadway
Staten Island
NY 10310**

Principal: Donna Luisi

Dates of review: March 10 - 12, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Vic Chaffey

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

John Greenleaf Whittier School is an elementary school with 566 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 44% Black, 44% Hispanic, 5% White, and 1.5% Asian students. The student body includes 13.8% English language learners and 29.5% 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 89.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school makes good use of Acuity and other diagnostic tools for data analysis, to support student progress.
- The principal and the senior team provide good leadership for the school.
- The school offers a wide range of extracurricular activities that enhance the curriculum.
- Good use is made of talented professional development to support teacher development and school improvement.
- The school has created a calm and harmonious environment that helps promote learning.
- The principal has substantially increased the school's resources for technology allowing students greater access to that area of the curriculum.
- There is a good program for the induction of new staff.
- The school provides good support for the personal and social development of students.
- Good use is made of a variety of data sources to support the progress of students, classes and most groups.
- The school makes highly effective use of differentiated approaches to learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve procedures to monitor attendance.
- Develop further the school's comparison with similar schools, so it can learn from the good practice of others.
- Use existing data to monitor and support the development and progress of higher achieving students more effectively.

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.

This is a caring, child-centered school, which has good knowledge of its students and teaches them well. The school's collection, use and analysis of data are very good. Use is made of data to set goals for the school, grades, classes and students and updates this to inform progress toward interim and long-term goals. The school community clearly understands and uses these goals and this includes individual goals that students keep for themselves. The school has a clear view of student achievement and progress. It is beginning to share this data more effectively with parents and students who are being encouraged to go online to view Acuity data. Many are now doing so. Use is made of data to understand and support the progress, and performance of most groups of students, though this practice does not include the higher achieving students. The school's highly effective use of differentiated teaching and learning techniques contributes greatly to the progress and development of all students. A breadth and variety of activities are used, promoting learning and ensuring the engagement and enjoyment of all students. One of the reasons differentiated teaching contributes so much to learning is because of the successful use of data to plan and modify intervention strategies.

Strategic management and planning contribute to the quality of teaching, as evidenced by the school's recognition of the link between professional development and providing scheduling and resources for it to be successful. The school is planning to continue this strategy. While the school reflects well on its internal practices and structures it is less successful in comparing itself with other schools and so it does not benefit from the knowledge and good practice of others. The school has been fortunate in being able to enhance significantly the resources it has to support the teaching of technology and is beginning to make good use of these resources to support both teaching and learning.

The school is a calm and harmonious place where good staff and student relationships contribute to the achievement and progress of all students. Under the firm leadership of the principal, the school has been successful in addressing the external pressures on its disciplinary regime. Attendance monitoring practices are not strong enough to ensure good attendance. The progress and achievements of the school are a testament to the hard work of the principal and her staff who together have created a school, which strives to do its very best for all its students.

The school has successfully addressed all of the areas for improvement raised by the last Quality Review. The inquiry team is an effective body, which is developing strategies to improve the performance of students whose needs are greatest.

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's comprehensive collection and use of data allows staff to have a thorough understanding of the performance of individual students, classes, grade and most groups. Good use is made of data to support special education students, English language learners and most other significant groups in the school's population. However, the school does not collect and use data as effectively for its higher achieving students. The collection of data to track the progress of individual students revolves strongly around the use of the Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System and Acuity. Staff use this information, often collaboratively, to plan interventions to support students' progress. The publication of grade achievement scores to two decimal places has allowed the school to measure more accurately the effect of its intervention strategies. This refinement allows the school to monitor more closely the progress of students. The school does not rigorously compare itself to other similar schools. Therefore, it lacks a significant benchmark against which to measure its progress and misses the opportunity of adopting the good practice of others.

The staff have a good grasp of the use and management of data. The school has planned continual professional development to ensure the most effective use of data. It has introduced a sixth preparation period to increase staff knowledge and skills in analysis and interpretation and the school's data specialist is effective in tabulating data so staff can make easy use of it.

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

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

The school uses its comprehensive system of data analysis to set and monitor school goals. The principal ensures whole school goals are measurable, realistic and have clear time scales for completion. Staff then translate these goals into goals for their own areas of responsibility. Teaching staff display their goals in classrooms to share them with the school community. Time frames for monitoring and review are in place but not always used as effectively as they might be.

The school sets goals for students, classes, grades and in particular, those students who most need support. For example, the inquiry team's goal is "to identify students in the greatest academic need and develop strategies for improvement." One teacher described student goals that are set in consultation with the teacher as, "It's like they have a little contract with themselves".

The school conveys its high expectations to parents and students in a number of ways. It combines traditional newsletters and attendance awards with parental meetings to reinforce high standards. More significantly, parents and students are encouraged to access Acuity data online to reinforce achievements and raise standards. Parents value

the school's 'open door' policy, which allows good communication between them and the school. The quality of students' work displayed in the school emphasizes the high standards the school expects of the students.

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 use and knowledge of differentiated teaching and approaches to learning is of a very high quality. The curriculum is adapted very effectively to meet the needs of the individual student. This ensures that all students work at levels that are in line with their ability and make very good progress. The breadth and variety of instruction makes learning interesting and compelling and enables students to be happy and enthusiastic learners. These approaches support special education students very well. Cross-school programs such as 'Foundation' and 'Core Knowledge' help students establish skills that are essential for good progress.

The school's good range of extracurricular activities and well-stocked library support and broaden the school's curriculum offering. The school has greatly enhanced the resources for technology, which it is now beginning to use to support both differentiated approaches to learning and other curricular-based activities. Unfortunately, due to the reduction in outdoor facilities, the school is unable to provide physical education for the recommended amount of time.

The principal and her team are fully aware of the impact that strategically targeted professional development and scheduling decisions can make in improving the performance of the school. For instance the introduction of the sixth preparation period with its emphasis on using and understanding data, particularly Acuity data, has improved planning and target setting throughout the school. Students value their school and their teachers, when asked they said, "All the teachers are on our side and they cheer you up when you are sad!" The 'Core Virtue' program promotes good student relationships.

Although the school has procedures to monitor attendance in place, it does not apply these procedures consistently enough to ensure more rigorous follow up of student absence.

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

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

Professional development is a strength of the school. A mentoring program supports the induction of new staff and established teachers through a variety of activities including formal observations and intervisitation, common planning time and co-teaching.

The school makes strenuous efforts to ensure that staff use and understand all the available data through strategic planning and professional development. This has strengthened goal and target setting for students' classes and groups. The school is

maintaining a good focus on continuous improvement and developing staff knowledge in this area of school life, for instance by using greater understanding and use of Acuity data to enable progress toward achieving school and class goals.

The school takes its responsibility for ensuring the moral guidance of its students seriously. It is very effective in supporting all its students both on an individual and school wide basis through guidance and support in response to the needs of individuals. The school has developed its "Core Virtue" which promotes values essential to all. It has set expectations that are understood by staff and students alike and responds directly to issues that warrant whole school attention, for instance with a recent anti-bullying program. Staff and students appreciate the strong action taken when necessary by the principal to ensure students' happiness and safety.

The school has developed a few successful partnerships with outside agencies, but not as many as those found in other schools. However, the Staten Island Foundation who has recently been instrumental in helping to improve technology provision supports them very well.

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 has well-established procedures to monitor student achievement and progress throughout the year. A comprehensive range of data generated from test results and diagnostic assessments allow the school to set measurable and realistic goals for both students and teachers. These are regularly reviewed and assessed, although the set timescales for some assessments are not always adhered to as well as they might be.

Students know and understand their goals, which the school reviews and monitors on a regular basis. Teachers and the school leadership team use the school's data-rich environment to enhance class and school practices. For example, the introduction of the 'Foundation' program was a direct result of this process. The continuous process of review and target setting for students, groups, teachers and the school in general contribute significantly to the overall progress of students.

The principal's vision, shared and supported by the whole staff, is for all students to make continuous improvement. A range of data and the use of differentiated approaches are driving this child-centered vision to teaching and learning. The principal and her staff work well together to manage change. They are flexible and responsive to addressing the needs of the students and the requirements of managing the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: John Greenleaf Whittier 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