



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The John Randolph School

Elementary School 047

**1794 East 172 Street
Bronx
NY 10472**

Principal: Thomas Guarnieri

Dates of review: October 18 - 19, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Nick Butt

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The John Randolph School is an elementary school with 1,131 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 31% Black, 60% Hispanic, 0.5% White, 0.5% Native Indian and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 17.6% English language learners and 11% 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 91%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 91% eligibility

The school is oversubscribed. It started enrolling Grade 5 students in September 2006.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principals provide excellent leadership focused on raising the achievement of all students.
- Monthly assessments alert teachers to changes in students' performance, in order to modify instruction and groupings to respond precisely to their needs.
- The school gathers data particularly effectively on its English language learners, ensuring they make rapid progress in their learning.
- The school keeps parents fully informed and takes every opportunity to make clear its high expectations of them in supporting students' learning.
- Curriculum approaches in the core subjects are highly relevant to students and generate data that is used very effectively in raising achievement.
- Teaching is consistent across the school in thoroughly differentiating instruction that challenges and motivates students.
- Students thrive in an exceptionally supportive environment where a culture of respect enables them to meet their academic and personal goals.
- The associate teacher model promotes highly effective ongoing professional development.
- The school runs extremely smoothly as a calm and harmonious learning environment because very effective systems are applied consistently
- The administration and teachers adapt plans exceptionally well in the light of frequent interim assessments to drive forward students' achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Use data that includes sub-groups of boys and girls and different ethnic groups when comparing the school's performance with that of similar schools.
- Ensure all members of staff are aware of the principal's whole-school goals to improve students' performance.
- Accelerate the progress of students on Level 3, so that more of them make Level 4, through developing appropriate enrichment strategies.
- Set interim benchmarks to check progress towards whole school goals, so that timely action can be taken to ensure they are achieved.

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.

Much care and attention has gone into making the school a place where learning is celebrated and in which students and parents feel welcome. One parent said, "They treat you like family." The principal and his assistant principals, each of whom is a grade leader, have the highest expectations of students and the staff. Through meticulous analysis of monthly assessments, they form extremely accurate views of the progress of each individual student, and how classrooms of students within each grade compare with one another. Teachers are held highly accountable for their students' achievement, and set annual targets for their performance.

The high-quality school's associate teacher program ensures that colleagues work together in pairs, especially in teaching reading. This means that less experienced teachers work with one or two experienced colleagues on a day-to-day basis, and analyze data collaboratively to improve student scores. This sets an outstanding baseline for ongoing professional development that is built upon through high-quality seminars and workshops, often led by the school's own coaches and administration. As one teacher put it, "We train each other." All teachers are aware of the principal's goals, and contribute to improving the school. These goals are not yet shared with other members of staff, including paraprofessionals and school aides, who play a valuable role in supporting students in their learning.

This is a reflective school, where innovative and creative approaches to the curriculum make learning enjoyable for students and challenge them to do their best. Libraries in each classroom offer a wealth of reading material, which is carefully graded to meet the needs of every student. The instruction is differentiated effectively, and a consistent approach ensures all students have access to high-quality learning. The school has succeeded in reducing the number of students who are referred for special education and those who make Level 1. Not enough students at Level 3 currently go on to make Level 4, and strategies are being developed to boost their learning through enrichment activities. An inquiry team has been set up and meets weekly to follow the progress of a control group of students drawn from special education and English as a second language classrooms.

The school has tackled diligently the areas to develop from the last Quality Review report. Teachers routinely analyze monthly assessments according to how boys and girls and different ethnic groups perform. Now the school recognizes the need to compare the performance of these sub-groups with those in similar schools. Whole school plans do not always have formal interim benchmarks to monitor progress, and tend to be reviewed only at the end of the year. Attendance has a much higher profile, with class competitions, rewards for 100% attendance and a clear focus on supporting families whose children's absence is a concern. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the attendance of the vast majority of students.

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.

Teachers gather data every month in English learning arts, math, social studies and science. Careful analysis enables them to build up a comprehensive picture of each student's progress, how classrooms are performing relative to one another, and the achievement of the grade as a whole. The school has modified the assessments it uses for special education students to give a clearer view of how well they are doing. The performance of English language learners is impressively documented and students in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms achieve extremely well because their teachers are so well informed. Since the last review, the school has analyzed data routinely by gender and ethnic groups and combined this with research into students' individual learning styles. As a result, instruction is much more closely geared to the needs of each student.

Personal portfolios, which keep a running record of their progress, accompany students as they move through the school. The assistant principals monitor the performance of classrooms and grades from year to year to look for patterns and trends. The school compares itself with those in its district for overall performance and attendance, but does not yet disaggregate this data into sub-groups, such as boys and girls or ethnic groups. Pairs of teachers consider the data for each classroom and collaborate together extremely effectively at grade level. Thus they become accomplished at using data to modify plans and improve instruction so that students continue to make good 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.

All teachers set goals for the students in their classrooms that go towards the school's Effective Annual Measurable Objective. As a result, teachers understand how their contribution enables the whole-school target to be met. They constantly monitor the progress of students and find ways to accelerate their learning as a result of sharing ideas and comparing student performance in particular areas. This leads them to focus on those pupils at risk of not making grade level so that suitable interventions are in place. These intervention strategies are evaluated frequently to ensure the best possible outcomes. The principal describes the whole school as "a learning community" that includes parents and staff as well as students.

The school keeps meticulous records of the support that is given and its impact on student learning. Teachers have "at risk class profile sheets" that show the programs that each student is undertaking, and draw up monthly "assurance forms" to closely monitor their progress. A recent initiative is to devise programs that help students working at Level 3 to move up to Level 4, as the school has noticed that too few currently manage this. Teachers with particular strengths in a curriculum area such as history or writing are engaged to boost their learning.

Teachers are fully aware of the principal's goals and how they help to meet them, but these have yet to be shared with other staff working at the school, such as paraprofessionals and school aides. The school makes its expectations crystal clear to parents and students, and keeps them extremely well informed about student progress. Monthly record cards are sent home, and through meetings and workshops such as the "open house" events, parents get to know the school's aims and aspirations. Innovative approaches to gathering information from parents include a recent survey asking them to describe their child's preferred learning style. A parent commented, "All children learn differently."

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 courses and materials in use are kept under constant review to ensure they are relevant and hold students' interest. Recently, for example, a hands-on approach to science has been adopted that actively involves students in practical work, such as studying chameleons. Literacy projects throughout the year establish pertinent and productive links with social studies, science and math. The curriculum is further enriched through specialist programs of ballroom dancing in grade 5, drama in grade 3 and interactive music in the kindergarten. Fifth graders learn to dance the tango with aplomb and take their moves very seriously. An extensive range of after-school activities, including basketball, photography, guitar lessons and computing, further develop students' interests. Visits to museums and galleries such as Cloisters and the Intrepid Transport Museum broaden students' experience. Themed events such as "Poem in your Pocket Day" and "Parent Read Aloud Day" bring literacy alive.

Teachers are held closely accountable for the progress of their students on a monthly basis, as interim assessments are analyzed thoroughly to identify any areas of deficit. The associate model of teaching promotes differentiated instruction, which is particularly effective in guided reading lessons, when pairs of teachers take responsibility for two groups each. These groupings are flexible, and changed in accordance with emerging data and ongoing assessments made by teachers during lessons. A huge investment in reading materials and classroom libraries has had a powerful impact on standards. The school's success in securing a \$1 million grant for a Robinhood Library and cutting-edge media center means it will remain a center of excellence for the promotion of reading for the foreseeable future.

There are excellent relationships between students and staff, so that students enjoy learning and want to be at school. One parent said, "My daughter loves it here, she doesn't want to leave," and students commented upon how helpful they found the staff. One said, "The teachers help us when we don't understand something and they talk us through it." The school has introduced many new strategies to increase attendance since the last review, and these are beginning to have an effect. Certificates for "Citizen of the Month" or for 100% attendance, motivate the pupils to attend, and the school ensures parents are clear about their responsibility to get their children to school each day.

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.

Teachers take to heart the school's motto, "Celebrate the knowledge", in learning from one another to improve their instruction. There is a completely open approach that enables teachers to observe one another and learn new ideas. This is enhanced by the fact that, for much of the time, experienced and inexperienced teachers work together in the same classroom. New teachers are given every support, not only by the teachers they work alongside, but also through tailored Saturday training. They are invited to join the administration on learning-development walkthroughs, so that they see right from the start the variety and quality of the instruction at work in the school. Feedback from these is particularly effective with its "one to glow on, one to grow on" model. The influential Professional Development Team, comprising administrators, coaches and representatives from each grade, plan the most relevant and beneficial support in line with whole school goals for improvement. Focus classrooms enable coaches to model good practice to groups of teachers, for example in preparation for the introduction of balanced literacy into grades 2 and 3. Teachers are invited to submit ideas for their own development, and appreciate the willingness of the principal and assistant principals to listen to them. One commented, "Our questions and concerns are theirs too."

The school runs as a well-oiled machine because systems of communication are so effective. All the senior leaders have Blackberries and the principal makes important announcements to every classroom through the loud-speaker system. Teachers are consistent in applying the school's discipline policy, so that students know where the boundaries lie and what will happen if they cross them. Partnerships with a wealth of organizations enrich and support students' development. These include EPIC, Rainbow Youth, Starr Drama, Dancing Classrooms and the Bronx Music Project.

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 is ambitious for his students and highly effective in articulating his vision for the school, which is known and supported by the entire learning community. He says, "Things might not be perfect, but we're learning things together." The principal and assistant principals are excellent role models for students, staff and parents resulting in positive change. In particular, the principal's accessibility and visibility is valued by parents, who say, "He doesn't forget you. He's there for you straight away."

The school is especially successful at setting interim goals for students at risk of not making grade level, and evaluating their progress towards them on a regular basis. Detailed analysis of their performance identifies particular skills that need developing. Monthly assessments of the work of all students ensure that groups and instructional plans are modified to ensure they achieve the best possible outcomes. The Comprehensive Education Plan contains useful action plans in the core subjects, with interim goals for grade leaders to measure. Other whole school priorities tend to be evaluated at the end of the year, and the school recognizes that it does not currently set benchmarks to show how well it is progressing towards these goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The John Randolph School PS047	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 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	
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?				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?					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	