



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Samuel Randall Elementary School

Public School 138

**2060 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473**

Principal: Lorraine Carroll-Dawkins

Dates of review: October 22 - 24, 2007

Reviewer: Peter Birks

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

Samuel Randall School is an elementary school with 943 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 38.4% Black, 59.6% Hispanic, 1.0% White, and 1.0% Asian students. The student body includes 6.0% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance is 93.0%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 86% eligibility.

The school has recently enrolled two extra grades of students, one at pre-kindergarten and the other at grade 5. This, together with the influx of an unusually high number of teachers new to the school, has provided unusual challenge.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school reviews and regularly updates its knowledge and understanding of the performance and progress of all its students.
- Students for whom Spanish is the first language are identified clearly and are well supported.
- The school is taking good steps to form alliances with similar schools and has started to compare performance and progress.
- School leaders and teachers collaborate well to organize and share data on the performance of students and to plan for improvement.
- Individual students in need of improvement are identified clearly.
- High expectations are promoted consistently to students, parents and caregivers, and within the wider community.
- The school provides a broad curriculum with rich experiences for its students.
- Teachers new to the profession receive clear direction and support.
- School leaders use tracking data well to direct strategic decisions within the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Formalize the collection and analysis of data according to gender, ethnicity and other categories.
- Create a more engaging and appropriate learning experience for special education students.
- Ensure greater consistency in the way that teachers use data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction.
- Develop the school's plans for improving both student and teacher outcomes to include interim goals and timeframes

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 proficient.

Samuel Randall School is a lively, well-presented and well-led school, with a strong community spirit that is highly valued by parents and students.

The school reviews and regularly updates its knowledge and understanding of the performance and progress of all its students and this is now a well-developed feature. The school's senior leaders effectively chart the progress of individual and groups of students within the school. Comparisons are beginning to be made with similar schools and useful alliances developed.

The school provides good support for students for whom Spanish is the first language. It also identifies those students requiring particular help because of special educational need. It is not yet providing the learning experiences necessary to engage special education students fully in order to enhance their learning appropriately.

Teachers are acquiring the techniques to use data to plan for and to provide differentiated instruction in the classrooms. Students respond well to this. There is still too much variation in the way that these techniques are applied.

The school has made progress since the last review particularly in the area of data management. An inquiry team is established. It first met in September and has held three further meetings to begin its 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 proficient.

The school collates data generated from both its own monitoring programs and from official testing programs efficiently. There is well-developed understanding and recording of the performance and progress of individual and groups of students. School leaders use this information to devise further professional development opportunities for staff, targeting areas necessary to accelerate the pace of student progress.

Within this data analysis, the school identifies clearly both English language learners and special education students. It then devises intervention and support programs for them. There are a few students who are new learners of English and they receive good help with

initial interpretation. While identification of special education students is clear and the additional provision for them outlined overtly, the experiences provided currently for special education students are not sufficiently engaging or appropriate for them.

The school maintains a good record of student performance and progress based on previous test results. Where test scores seem to indicate a dip in student performance, as in grade 3 English language arts last year, the school leadership takes effective steps to remedy the situation and to address the reasons for the fall. The school also examines the progress of students in comparison with similar neighborhood schools and is actively engaged in forming professional alliances. The school does not formalize the collection and analysis of data according to gender, ethnicity and other categories.

With the addition of a significant number of new staff members this year, the school set up information and support meetings for teachers on the first two days of the year. The school used these opportunities to clarify how school data should be processed both to inform planning and instruction and to monitor the progress of students. Teachers also examined data from the previous year to help them in their preparations and to establish groupings in their classes. This contributed well to an effective introduction for the new members of staff.

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 proficient.

The school has a well-planned structure for the use of common preparation periods for staff. They take place on a regular basis within grades. At the grade meetings, staff share data on student performance and develop implementation plans. The principal and two assistant principals each work with groups of teachers in a number of the grades. This enables the school leaders to retain firsthand knowledge of grade strategies and developing patterns of need.

The school uses these periods effectively to promote more collaborative planning amongst teachers, to share good practice and to establish goals for improvement. Staff link these goals clearly to test timetables and pacing calendars, particularly in the upper grades. The school administration and coaches make a significant contribution to the data interpretation at these meetings and to the joint planning. Coaches pursue any individual teaching or organizational concerns that may emerge.

The whole of the school teaching community accepts a shared responsibility for the analysis of data to aid their planning for the improved performance and progression of students throughout the school. Strategies are usually coordinated with test requirements and with test timetables. The principal sees the endeavor for improvement as “a community push” throughout the school, from pre-kindergarten upwards. This philosophy of shared responsibility helps to reinforce the strong commitment of the whole school to high expectations and the development of an effective whole school instructional program. Parents and caregivers are appreciative of this approach and support it eagerly.

Teachers invite parents and caregivers into school for conferences about their child’s performance and progress three times per year. Parents express satisfaction with this arrangement, also with the monthly newsletter and with the regular reports home they

receive on the progress of their children and the goals that they are being set. They enthusiastically welcome workshops set up for them by the school.

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 proficient.

The school provides a balanced core curriculum that develops through the school and links eventually to the testing requirements in the upper grades. It monitors carefully the student progress through this curriculum as it builds from kindergarten through grade five. Additionally, the school provides a lively enrichment program for its students, often involving the local community. This program ranges from Saturday band to external trips to places of local cultural interest. Students take part in popular school shows and the school lays claim to being “138 on Broadway”.

The school has eleven teachers this year who are new to the staff. Both existing staff and the new teachers have had to form new alliances. They are beginning to collaborate and share understanding of the school’s approaches to the use of data to provide differentiated instruction to meet the specific needs of all students. For some, differentiated instruction is a challenging new concept. To get teachers more familiar with the techniques the school has designated a testing coordinator to assist with the management of the data. This has released both assistant principals to work more extensively with staff. As a result, staff are better engaged with the professional challenge and personal accountabilities that a differentiated instructional policy can pose. Shared staff strategies are developing but there is still inconsistency in the way that teachers currently apply differentiated instruction techniques in the classrooms.

School budgeting priorities reflect the additional resource demands of the addition of two extra grades to the school. The clear analysis of student performance and progress drives further decisions. The budget currently offers additional support for the lower grades, support services and the further development of the school enrichment program. Punctuality has improved since the change to the start of the school day and attendance rates are on a par with similar schools citywide.

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 proficient.

The principal and the assistant principal use classroom visits to monitor progress made towards the use of differentiation strategies in the classroom. Formally, they do this on an infrequent basis. They make more frequent visits informally. Coaches make a very valuable contribution to this strategy by assisting colleagues to tackle the detail of how best to differentiate instruction. Teachers visit each other’s classrooms and meet together to share their classroom practice, but not all teachers are confident to engage in a fully open and reflective professional dialogue about their work.

There is a very helpful theme running through the professional development plans focusing on classroom organization and development of differentiated instructional practices. The

school has planned a well-targeted conference on the use of data for differentiated instruction in the classroom. However, the patterns of classroom visits and associated support strategies for teachers are not sufficiently rigorous or consistent throughout the school to secure the consistency of classroom practice that would support this program.

The school runs smoothly, efficiently and thoughtfully. It has aligned good support services around the academic and social needs of its students including counseling, occupational therapy and speech. It has good links to outside agencies. The school provides clear direction and support to the teacher who is new to the profession. This includes collaboration with other teachers and support from the coaches.

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 proficient.

The school leadership monitors and evaluates the progress of its students regularly. They consider interim reports based on the pacing calendar for the testing programme. They conduct a close scrutiny of student progress within grades, based upon information collated and provided by the teachers. The school plans clear interventions to support any perceived needs emerging from this analysis. This may include support from one of the school coaches and investment in more or new supportive materials. Reaction is prompt, flexible and targeted well.

School leaders have a clear program for the setting of goals to improve student outcomes linked clearly to the testing calendar. To facilitate the planning, all grades have monthly common preparation periods, the first of which is with members of the school administration to agree overall testing targets. Teachers use subsequent periods to discuss and plan with coaches the instructional implications for the grade of meeting those overall targets.

The targets themselves do not include specific interim goals and associated timescales either for individual students or for individual teachers, other than those specific to the test requirements. This inhibits the development of flexible plans and practices that focus on the variation in pace of diverse student learning styles, and the differentiated teaching approaches necessary to meet the specific needs of individual students.

The school, under the discerning leadership of the principal, recognizes the challenges inherent in combining high academic expectation with meeting the social, emotional and language needs of many of its students. To help address these challenges, the school works closely with the wider community to enrich the life experiences of its students through bringing more of the outside world within their reach. The parents and caregivers are appreciative of this work and wish the school to continue with this approach, while maintaining a high level of academic expectation for the students.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Samuel Randall School PS 138	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		