



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Evergreen Elementary School

**Elementary School 152
1007 Evergreen Avenue
Bronx
NY 10472**

Principal: Frances J Lynch

Dates of review: October 15 - 17, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Sandra Tweddell

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Evergreen School is an elementary school with 912 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 30.6% Black, 67.5% Hispanic, 0.3% White and 1.2% Asian students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 13.3% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 56% eligibility.

Until 2006, there was no pre-kindergarten or kindergarten. In 2006, the principal took on additional responsibility for an Early Years Center, some 6 blocks away. At about the same time, a number of grade 4 and 5 students from another school enrolled in Evergreen School.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is an effective and strategic leader, highly respected by the community, with very high expectations of her staff and students.
- The cabinet works very effectively as a team and is focused on raising achievement and ensuring that the school runs very smoothly.
- Data is used very well by the cabinet to develop strategies for improvement and to focus professional development.
- Effective use of short-term goals has led to an increase in student achievement over the past three years.
- Attendance is higher than that of similar schools because students enjoy learning and the school's systems encourage them to attend regularly.
- Teachers have ready access to a wide range of data about their classes and use it to inform lessons and as a focus for discussion about improvement.
- The school is a strong learning community, runs very effectively and new teachers quickly become part of the team.
- The child study group is effective at identifying those at risk and providing interdisciplinary support.
- The ethos of the school, in which all are valued, promotes confidence, self esteem and high aspirations.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that data is used effectively to challenge high achieving students.
- Involve all staff in the development of a long-term strategic vision.
- Ensure that the school's strategic plans sets out priorities for action, a time frame for their implementation and success criteria to show when the priorities have been met.

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 continues to develop well because of the indefatigable leadership of the principal who has extremely high expectations of her students, her staff and herself. She is constantly alert to new developments, using the wealth of data created by teachers to guide school improvement and staff professional development. The cabinet, a knowledgeable and cohesive team, supports her well. Analysis of data showed that performance in reading, writing and mathematics has risen over the past three years, with more students achieving Level 3, particularly in mathematics. Data shows that the number of high achieving students is small and has not shown the same improving trend. Thoughtful systems are being established to chart students' progress in these subjects.

The school has developed a culture of a strong learning community, in which all are willing to learn. Teachers work hard to implement new ideas so there is a high degree of consistency in all classrooms. Para-professionals are highly trained and play a considerable part in classrooms. Nothing is hidden in the school, charts showing the progress of students and other data are posted around the school so all have a good knowledge of the success of the school. Strong links between the Early Years Center and the school are due to the very good management systems and interpersonal skills of all leaders, and as a result children receive a very good start to their education.

The interdisciplinary Child Study Group is effective in identifying students at risk and intervening quickly. All who work in the building pull together to create the warm and inviting ethos that greets all when they arrive. Attendance is high because students find learning fun and systems encourage them to attend regularly. Parents speak highly of the school.

The principal and cabinet have a long term vision for the school that is not always explicitly shared with staff. There is currently no long term strategic plan for the school that lays out how the vision is to be achieved.

All the points for improvement since the last review have been addressed well. A system is being developed to check on the progress of groups of students and samples of writing are being calibrated by each grade to form a portfolio of work. The number of parents coming to meetings has increased. The inquiry team is focusing on the teaching and learning of English language learners and the work is at an early stage.

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 has continued to develop new approaches to assessment and classrooms are data rich. Monthly tests are analyzed to identify areas that are strong and which need to be improved. Classes are ranked according to their results and the information feeds into the professional development of teachers. Students who are at the borders of levels are identified for additional support. Each student has a card showing their mathematics and reading level so they are kept informed of how well they are doing. A recent development is a visual system used to monitor the performance of groups of students, including the identification of boys and girls, to check how well they are doing. It is too early to see the impact of this on achievement.

Special education students are monitored in the same way, as are English language learners. The multidisciplinary child study group uses data well at its meetings so interventions are well targeted. Teachers' assessment binders are up to date as the principal sees this as a high priority. Nothing is hidden in this school and charts mapping the progress of students in different subjects are highly visible around the school.

Although the principal does not compare Evergreen's results with similar schools, in her striving for excellence she looks for schools that are doing well and uses the network of schools to learn from others. Professional development has a very high priority and the use of data has been an ongoing theme. As a result, teachers use data well to group students for instruction. The result of this work is that achievement has risen over the past three years.

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.

Teachers work closely together in grade teams to assess the progress that students are making. Charts for each class show at what stage students are working. This has resulted in much professional discussion about the reasons for individual's and group's performance. The charts identify those who are struggling and those who need an extra boost. This information is used well to set the next step for students' learning. This is not the case, though, for high achieving students, whose progress has not been as pronounced as other groups of students. Pacing guides for English language arts and mathematics have been developed as a result of these analyses and this is making teaching more focused. One result of the analysis is that English language learners have been identified as the focus for the inquiry team. Collaborative team teaching takes place in response to the data, especially for those in the greatest need of support. As part of the processes, students engage in a dialogue with their teachers about their work and targets are set together. Special education students are supported very well through a number of strategies, based on analysis of their needs.

Surveys from parents were analyzed to see what parents wanted from the school. After school programs were established for student enrichment and parents are invited to celebrate their children's successes each month and twice a year during winter and spring shows. As a result, numbers attending meetings and receiving information have increased. Parents receive

information about how they can help their children and all information is translated in Spanish. At these meetings, parents have the opportunity to discuss their children with bilingual support if they need it. The principal and teachers are vigilant in impressing upon parents and students the need to work hard to achieve the highest grades.

All members of the school community are aware of the school's short term goals to improve achievement in reading and writing. They are clear about how they will achieve them. The consistency of practice in all classrooms demonstrates that all are working towards the same goal.

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 curriculum is exciting. Students say that they thoroughly enjoy their lessons as many of them are fun. They especially like mathematics, art, music, drama and gym, which all students study. One of the school's aims is to provide a curriculum that integrates subjects and provides meaningful data. Moves towards this can be seen in social studies and science, both of which develop skills of reading, writing and mathematics well. In class, students are highly motivated by the range of activities. They are placed in groups according to their needs and teaching is planned that matches their needs. This is a strength of the school and is raising achievement.

There is an appropriately strong focus on reading and writing as these areas were identified as weaker than mathematics. Currently, all classes are focusing on how writing develops. Students are given written feedback about their work and the work is displayed in corridors and classrooms so all can learn from one another. This is helping students become aware of how they can improve their work to reach higher grades. Staffing and resources are effectively allocated according to the needs of students. Two additional teachers of English as a second language were hired because of increasing numbers of English language learners. A second mathematics staff developer was appointed to support progress in mathematics. In response to the students' needs, the school has many paraprofessionals who are very well trained and make a very good contribution to classrooms.

Attendance is good because children want to come to school. Children are also encouraged to attend regularly by inter class competitions which determine which class has the highest attendance rate. Team-work throughout the school is very strong as every member of the community is valued. The security officer and secretaries greet children warmly when they arrive in the morning. Students regard the school as a family and teachers speak of the excellent supportive environment in which they work. The cabinet has worked hard to ensure that the Early Years Center is a valued part of the school by creating strong links. The culture of the school is one of high expectations and mutual respect amongst staff and students.

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 has a very high priority and is implemented in response to individual teacher's needs. A selection of meetings are offered and attendance is mandatory. Teachers are

asked to complete a chart that looks at the qualities of teaching and asks them to grade where they believe themselves to be. This has raised the level of professional discussion. Teachers also have the opportunity to visit one another's classrooms. The cabinet identifies good practice in their frequent monitoring and evaluation of lessons and staff are then invited to visit the lessons. This year, inter-visitation has a focus based on the professional development themes of improvement in English language arts. Teachers are encouraged to become models of good practice and they are willing to have other teachers visit their classrooms.

Teachers who are new to the school speak very highly of the support they receive from mentors and others. New teachers are paired with an experienced teacher and the staff developers work closely with them. New teachers comment that they can talk to anyone on the staff if they have a question.

Many agencies attend the weekly child study meetings. This interdisciplinary team quickly identifies students at risk and then intervenes to support the children and their families. Another vision for the school is that all members, in whatever role, contribute to the school community. One example of success is the involvement of staff with expertise, such as music or art, to contribute to the education of children.

The school mascot, an eagle chosen by students, is being painted as a mural with the help of a member of staff. A beautifully presented book, created as a result of the school's involvement in music with the community, is proudly displayed. The school runs effortlessly because of the concerted work of the cabinet and office staff. Students are very clear about the code of conduct that is expected and they follow it well. The code is based on very high expectations and actions that recognize positive behavior.

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 excellent leadership of the principal, supported by the cabinet and the close team work has created a community in which all wish to learn. The school has many short-term goals with clear time frames and these are what have caused achievement to rise. The principal and cabinet have a clear vision for the school that includes becoming a school of excellence. Systems are in place to lead to this and monitoring and revision of these systems are very strong. For example the school is revising the way in which conference notes are recorded to strengthen goal setting. .

The result of the short-term planning goals is that the school is moving in a positive direction. However, teachers are not as clear about how the long term vision will be achieved. It is also not clear to the cabinet how successful or otherwise their work has been towards the vision. Much work has gone into improving the school but there is little record of this, or which interventions have been successful. At student level, periodic assessment is used very effectively to adjust programs and intervention. This has been helped by the development of charts for reading that show, at a glance, how well each student is performing. In writing, the work on display with written comments is being used to improve learning by students. Yet, the school does not have strategic plans for action or a time frame for their implementation along with success criteria showing when the goals have been met.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| SCHOOL NAME: Evergreen Elementary School (PS 152) | 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 | |