

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Clinton Hill School

Elementary School 20

**225 Adelphi Street
Brooklyn
NY 11205**

Principal: Sean Keaton

Dates of review: October 28 - 29, 2008

Lead Reviewer: John Collings

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Clinton Hill is an elementary school with 399 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 74% Black, 17% Hispanic, 6% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 0.01% English language learners and 0.05% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 95.0%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 65% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient

Clinton Hill elementary school has a positive learning environment. Students are engaged in their work and enjoy coming to school. They are well behaved and show mutual respect for each other and to adults. Parents find that the principal and teachers are approachable and work with them in the best interests of the students.

Students' academic strengths and weaknesses are monitored carefully through good analysis of data and work is planned to meet their identified needs. Progress is monitored frequently, particularly in English language arts, math, social studies and science. Reports are normally sent home weekly to inform parents how their children are performing.

The school has an integrated curriculum to enhance learning, by enabling students to make cognitive links between subjects to allow consolidation and application of knowledge understanding and skills. The curriculum is significantly enhanced by a range of visits and visitors which extend students' experiences, particularly in the arts.

Students' learning goals are set in English language arts, math, social studies and science. These are more detailed in English language arts and math and this detail is now being extended to social studies and science. Students are also encouraged to evaluate their own learning and set personal and academic short-term and long-term goals. Teachers ensure goals are realistic and achievable. Although parents are well aware of the progress their children are making, they are less aware of their academic and personal goals and the steps necessary to reach them. This limits their ability to support them.

The school has a good range of professional development opportunities to meet the needs of the most teachers but they are not sufficiently differentiated to meet individual needs. They include learning opportunities through "lunch and learn" sessions, visiting speakers and the studying of academic texts. Teachers needing individual support are catered for well. However, not all teachers have individualized professional development plans to improve their instructional practice, in particular in differentiating learning to meet the needs of higher-achieving students.

The school is currently revising its Comprehensive Education Plan to provide a clearer vision for its long-term and short-term future. Goals are prioritized but timeframes and benchmarks are not sufficiently rigorous.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school uses a good range of data to analyze students' strengths and weaknesses by monitoring performance and progress in English language arts, math, social studies and science.
- Good integrated curriculum planning is helping teachers and students to make connections between subjects to bridge and reinforce their learning.
- There is an effective system in place for identifying and reviewing students' learning goals in English language arts and math which is being extended to social studies and science.
- Students are well behaved, engaged in their work and want to learn in the positive learning environment where mutual respect is shown to each other and to adults.
- A good range of visits and visitors to the school supports the arts in the curriculum and gives students a wide range of experience.
- Good classroom observations, reviews of student work and conferencing with teachers identify the school's professional development needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Replicate the use of data for setting student goals in English language arts, math, social studies and science in a wider range of subjects.
- Create individualized professional development plans for teachers to ensure they receive support best suited to their needs in improving student outcomes.
- Extend current good examples of intervisitations and professional development to improve teachers' use of differentiation in lessons to ensure higher achieving students are fully challenged.
- Rationalize the process of developing long-term and short-term whole-school goals with clear time lines and benchmarks to enable more effective monitoring of progress.

Part 3: Main Findings

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has analyzed data from English language arts and math very systematically for some time and has created a robust system for identifying trends in individual students' strengths and weaknesses, enabling creation of groupings within classes to increase differentiation. Similar practices in social studies and science have been adopted since September and progress is being made in differentiating expectations based on prior performance. Data is also used effectively to monitor subgroups of students, for example, English language learners, special education students and performance of students who are young for their year.

Regular, often weekly, progress reports keep parents well informed about their child's performance. There is good communication and feedback from parents who are required to sign acknowledgement of the receipt of the progress reports. However, the school has recently identified the need to monitor student progress more accurately against the definition in the Department of Education's progress report and convey this clearly to parents. This is enabling the school to raise expectations to ensure all students, regardless of ability, are fully challenged and receive instruction best suited to their learning needs.

Currently there is a significant variation in the use of differentiated instruction within the school and data is being used to plan appropriate professional development to enable all teachers to make full use of this technique to enhance student learning.

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

Students are very involved in setting their own goals. This is a relatively new innovation and tends to concentrate on students developing personal goals and aspirational academic goals. Teachers' increasing understanding of setting academic goals based on students' recent progress is allowing them to guide students to set realistic and shorter-term goals in line with expectations of the next steps they should be taking. Teachers are becoming more adept at setting and reviewing realistic goals, which are agreed between students and teachers through individual conferencing. Although families are well aware of their children's performance this more detailed goal setting is yet to be fully understood and communicated to parents. Goal setting in English-language arts and math is currently more fully developed than for social studies and

science. However, teachers are following good procedures and applying the procedures in English language arts and math more systematically to social studies and science. They are also at an early stage of identifying how goal setting can be developed across the remaining core subjects to provide a more holistic view of individual students' strengths and weaknesses.

The school is currently reviewing its Comprehensive Education Plan and is using the appropriate data to identify the strategies needed in order to improve student progress. This is an ongoing process where the senior leadership team reviews the success of previous goals and is beginning to set realistic timeframes and expectations for each of the short-term and long-term goals.

Expectations of behavior and attendance are high. Review of the progress data of individual students and groups of students has identified that academic expectations, particularly of higher-attaining students, have not always been high enough. As a result, goal setting emphasizing high expectations of progress from one year to the next, and how these are communicated to parents, has now become a priority for the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The curriculum is well integrated and aligned to state standards. This is enabling teachers to make connections between subjects to bridge and reinforce student learning and to allow learning in one subject to be applied and consolidated through another. The curriculum is further enhanced through visiting artists, filmmakers, photographers and writers. This has resulted in an impressive range of local photographs displayed around the school and development of the school website by students. The school is also developing links between English language arts and social studies, and between math and science, to extend writing skills and to enhance the application of math in real situations.

Some teachers within the school are very adaptive and expert in differentiating their lessons to meet the individual and group needs of the students in their classes. Others are less expert, particularly at ensuring higher-achieving students are challenged sufficiently. However, the vast majority of teachers engage their students through well-planned lessons resulting in purposeful learning.

The school has created a good climate of support for teachers. The school leadership team has made a number of strategic decisions to improve instruction to enable students to meet their learning goals. For example, a good range of visits and visitors ensures the curriculum is stimulating and engaging. Flexibility in scheduling has enabled teachers across grades to meet and plan effectively and has also enabled teachers to change the order in which subjects are taught to maintain student interest.

Students trust their teachers and feel very well supported. They feel able to approach any adult in the school with personal or academic concerns. Students treat each other with respect and are able to work cooperatively and collaboratively when required. They behave well and are able to identify personal aspirational goals.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: the school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has a good structure for allowing teachers to meet frequently to discuss planning and instructional issues, such as differentiation. There are bi-monthly faculty meetings. Grade and study groups meet weekly and "lunch and learn" sessions are used to develop a climate of a "professional learning community". The strong emphasis during these sessions is to review implementation of differentiation across the whole school through following the good examples already in place. However, while professional development activities are broadly well directed at the needs of the school these are not translated well into individualized professional development plans for each teacher. As a result, while teachers are well aware of overall school goals, they are not clear enough of their own personal goals and how these fit into a bigger picture. For example, although there is a general emphasis on improving differentiation in classes there are no individualized goals to ensure all individual teachers improve their use of the technique.

Teachers are very reflective of their structural practice and have the opportunity, should they wish, to join the inquiry team. Work by the previous team identified some important issues. For example, students able to take part in self-assessment were more motivated and largely made better progress than those who did not. The team also found that the integrated curriculum motivated students and data reinforced the importance of differentiation in meeting individual students' needs. These issues are now being incorporated into the school's philosophy on setting individual student goals and whole-school goals, and into its curriculum and instructional approaches.

There is a positive relationship between parents and the school. Good relationships between students and their teachers provide very sound personal support, particularly with the addition of counselors and other support services. There is also good support for families through counseling and medical support from outside agencies. A particular strength has been the school's support for a significant number of grandparents to enable them to help their grandchildren effectively with their learning. However, the school is still improving methods of communicating student progress and progress towards their goals with their families.

Quality Statement 5 - Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 has a robust system for reporting the performance of children to their parents. This data is also well used by senior leaders to identify the performance of individual students, sub-groups and grades. The school has become increasingly aware of the need to monitor progress as identified by the Department of Education's progress reports as well as performance. As a result, the school is beginning to set student goals

based on their previous progress and is developing ways of communicating this clearly to parents.

The senior leaders review the weekly progress reports to monitor the extent to which students are making sufficient improvement to reach the goals set at least monthly. Teachers also use the data to inform differentiation in the classroom. However, this is not consistently implemented across all classes. The school has used information from the learning environment survey, the previous quality review and particularly the inquiry team to evaluate the school's practices. As a result, there is a greater emphasis on improving differentiation and involving students to take increased responsibility in their own learning by discussing academic and personal goals with their teachers.

The school is reviewing its Comprehensive Education Plan. However, currently the school's goals are not sufficiently guided by a longer-term vision and consequently do not include shorter-term goals, expectations, responsibilities and timeframes to realize any long-term goals.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Clinton Hill School	△	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>				
	△	▶	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			X	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			X	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>				
	△	▶	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		X		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			X	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of .. . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DY0, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	▷	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X				
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	▷	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?		X					
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X				
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X				
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	▷	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X				
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X				
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X				
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?		X					
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	▷	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed