

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Central Park East II

Elementary School 964

**19 East 103rd Street
New York
NY 10029**

Principal: Naomi Smith

Dates of review: November 17 - 18, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Central Park East II is a school with 197 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 56% Black, 29% Hispanic, 11% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 30% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 93.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 61% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school has made good progress since the last Quality Review, while strengthening its already good practice. It prepares the students well for the future both academically and emotionally. This is recognized and appreciated by parents who feel they are equal partners in the school. Very good communication systems are in place to keep parents informed about their children's achievements. There is an outstanding level of trust and respect between students and their teachers and staff and the principal. Parents are also effusive about the school, stating that their children attend "a public school with a private school feeling." Strong external partnerships are supportive of students academically and socially. At the center of everything that the school does is the total commitment of the staff to provide the students with a holistic education and the recognition that students must be successful.

Good opportunities are provided for staff to meet, learn and share best practices. Faculty regularly meets and collaborates on setting goals for success that involve knowing the children and targeting instruction. However, the goal setting process is not yet refined suitably to include measurable interim steps that are consistently monitored and evaluated, nor are they effectively shared with the entire school community. Teachers use data effectively to inform planning and differentiate instruction. However, differentiating instruction to ensure higher-achieving students are fully challenged is not yet evident. The curriculum is broad and engaging with a strong focus on integrating the arts.

The school reviews its State test data, designs its own periodic assessments, and uses the information to assess student progress over time and to provide suitable interventions. As a result, special education students are making very good progress. The school's inquiry team is working well and is starting to expand the good practice in the use of data that already exists in the school. Their work is beginning to impact school-wide instructional practices. The team is engaged in research on supporting the literacy needs of English language learners and is now making extremely good use of this information to impact on the progress of this target group.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Staff professional growth is enhanced by regular opportunities to meet together to plan and share good practice.
- The school has developed strong partnerships with outside organizations that have a positive impact on students' social, emotional and academic development.
- The strong collaborative work among support services and school staff enables the school to accelerate the progress of special education students.
- There are strong productive relationships, which are characterized by mutual respect, trust and teamwork among the principal, faculty, and students.
- The teachers use data effectively to identify areas for student development and to provide intervention strategies.
- The school has developed excellent communication systems with parents, who have high praise for the academic support and care their children receive.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that whole-school long-term and interim goals are time framed, measurable and continually monitored.
- Build on the work of the inquiry team to develop the use of data, explicit teaching, and effective instructional strategies to accelerate the learning of all students.
- Develop consistent practices across all core areas in assessing short-term learning goals that are understood by students and shared with parents.
- Ensure that instruction is differentiated to challenge the highest-achieving students so that they improve their levels of performance.

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 uses a good combination of hard and soft data to identify the performance and progress of students, classes and grades. Teachers use class-based data, including running records, conference notes, and analysis of reading logs, post-its, student work and reader's notebooks very effectively to monitor student performance and progress. Teachers regularly engage in the observation of student performance and discussions about the quality of student work. Of particular note are the very detailed student profiles that have been developed as a result of the school working closely with a network of schools to look at math assessments. Qualitative data is collected through close observation and descriptive narrative reviews of children and their progress. In addition, the school also uses hard data. This has enabled the school to compare the performance of English language learners, ethnic groups, and special education students in English language arts and math. However, good data analysis also identifies that while the progress of English language learners and special education students is good, higher-achieving students do not necessarily make maximum progress. However, the school recognizes the need to monitor how well the students are improving year-on-year effectively and ensure all are fully challenged.

Parents are well supported and are very pleased with the excellent communication systems the school has put in place that support the understanding of the school's development and their own children's progress and performance. It is easy for parents to meet with teachers and the principal to discuss their children.

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 principal and staff have high expectations for students, and effectively convey this to parents via e-mail, daily interaction, and a school newsletter. Several good school structures support goal setting. School planning occurs in a variety of ways from the spring of the previous year and includes grade-level team meetings, conferences and long-term goal setting. Teachers set actionable and differentiated learning goals for all students in math, reading, writing and science by utilizing a combination of assessment data. Review of data also helps identify students for suitable interventions. Parents and students have input into the goal-setting process several times throughout the year. November family conferences are designated as "Goal Setting" conferences. During open-school week, teachers create individual student profiles in the core subject areas and share them with parents. As a result, parents are actively involved in setting effective, attainable goals with and for their children. Based on the schools' adherence to the philosophy of the responsive classroom, all students begin the year by setting their personal or academic "hopes and

dreams” for the school year. Students work together successfully to create classroom rules to support attainment of their goals. While teachers set differentiated learning goals for all students in reading, math, writing, and science, some of the goals are too general and progress cannot always be measured in terms of quantifiable gains. There is not enough focus and planning around using short-term goals to monitor student progress. Goals are also not sufficiently rigorous, time-framed, measurable and continually monitored.

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 school provides a rich engaging and relevant curriculum. The student-centered approach to learning is enjoyed by students as evidenced by the engaging projects and hands-on activities in which they successfully participate. The curriculum is enriched with exemplary arts and music programs, and exciting initiatives such as ‘Operation Explore’ which allows students to learn about the environment by visiting Camp Taconic. The principal and other key staff are highly visible and engage teachers in professional conversations related to using data and differentiating instruction to meet students’ learning needs. In particular, this has supported lower-achieving and middle-achieving students very well. However, from good data analysis the school has identified that this good practice does not extend adequately to challenge students who perform well. The budget has been used very strategically to ensure there are adequate staff, resources and professional development to support curricular changes. To ensure that there are enough trained personnel for improved phonics based work, four staff members attended Wilson training. There is mutual trust between students, parents, and staff created through good teaching, student support and an engaging curriculum. Students commented that teachers give them a good education. One student said, “They help us if we don’t know, they give us clues, but we have to work it out ourselves.”

Students and parents agree that the school provides a very safe and nurturing environment. Students trust and respect their teachers and feel able to talk to them about any matters of concern. Another student stated, “If I have difficulty, I can go to any teacher.” The school’s focus on the philosophy of a “responsive classroom”, where emotional support and positive communication are the priority contributes to the successful positive tone exhibited throughout the school.

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.

There are excellent opportunities for professional development linked directly to individual teachers’ needs while supporting whole-school improvement goals. Good professional development enables teachers to meet regularly, plan and share best practices. Therefore, teachers are becoming more proficient in reviewing the increasing amount of data available to the school to inform instruction. The principal uses a range of differentiated classroom observations to give responsibilities to experienced coaches while helping effectively those teachers new to the school and to the profession. Teachers are highly complimentary of the recognition of their varied skills and the match of professional development to their individual needs. In addition, the induction of the one new teacher is exemplary who is receiving one-

on-one mentoring from an F-status specialist along with suitable guidance from literacy and math coaches. This support has resulted in very good teaching practices for the new teacher. The school also provides all teachers opportunities to attend off-site seminars that develop further their knowledge and best practices.

The school is peaceful, orderly and safe. Day-to-day procedures are consistent and sensitive. The care and safety of students is a high priority. The students feel safe in the school and able to approach any member of staff with academic or personal problems. The school has developed excellent communication systems with parents who have high praise for the academic support and care their children receive. Parents articulated their satisfaction with the inclusive nature of the school and the opportunities to celebrate its uniqueness. One parent stated; "This is a public school, with a private school feeling." Significant partnerships that support the academic and personal growth of students include Teachers College, which provides challenging professional development in literacy. 'Opus 118' ensures that students receive violin instruction across the grades and the Gateway National Recreation Park provides hands-on experiences within the science curriculum.

The established inquiry team is expanding the good practice in the use of data existing in the school. This year's work is building on the previous years' focus on students with language and special learning needs. Based on last year's findings, this year's team has chosen a target group of students in grades 3, 4, and 5 who are working at very low levels, and for whom English is not their primary language and not identified as English language learners. Teachers maintain comprehensive records for every child and carefully track their achievement and progress in each grade and class. However, this good data analysis has not been expanded to accelerate the learning of all students.

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.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school's leadership has a clear vision for where it wants the school to go and how they are going to achieve this. The principal and her staff meet regularly to evaluate student progress towards meeting the monthly benchmarks. School goals are shared with the entire school community during faculty conferences and parent-teacher conferences.

The robust nature and wide variety of data have provided the school staff with an overview of the school's strengths and the areas where it needs to improve. The Comprehensive Educational Plan, drawn up by the principal and the school's leadership team, informs goal setting throughout the school. Although some plans have well-defined interim goals and a timeline, not all goals are specific or quantified. Therefore, the school is not able to judge some outcomes adequately. While it is still possible to monitor and evaluate whole school progress over time, the lack of interim checkpoints in some action plans restricts the ongoing evaluation of student progress and consequently the ability to monitor and revise everyday plans for student learning. The staff and key personnel are diligent and committed to ensure that students meet their goals. Teachers have successfully expanded their use of formative and summative assessments to address student strengths and needs, and effectively inform their planning and targeted instruction. The staff looks closely at data to identify students in need of greater support and work collaboratively with families to set interim goals for students who are not making adequate progress in the areas of literacy and math. However, to achieve the best for each student regular revisions and modifications of students' goals are not yet fully established in all core areas.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Central Park East II	△	▷	✓	+
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, DYO, 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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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

Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed
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