

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

Clinton Hill School

Elementary School 020

**225 Adelphi Street
Brooklyn
NY 11205**

Principal: Lena Barbera

Dates of review: January 14 - 15, 2010

Lead Reviewer: James Machen

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Clinton Hill School is an elementary school with 397 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 75% Black, 17% Hispanic, 6% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for the other 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 94%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The Clinton Hill School provides a teaching and learning environment based on mutual respect where students are able to pursue academic success. Although the principal is new, the school serves its community well, due to a high quality leadership team that focuses closely on high expectations for everyone. The school collects and analyzes data rigorously at all levels to inform instruction. Effective use of resources enhances the good teaching in the school. Numerous partnerships with outside agencies support students in the learning process. The atmosphere in the school is harmonious and friendly. The school runs smoothly as staff and students know and adhere to the procedures and policies in which students have a say. Within each department, all students and teachers know each other well, showing extremely high levels of trust and respect for each other. The whole school community works collaboratively for the good of the students, developing their confidence and range of experiences.

The extensive curriculum fully extends students and gives them every opportunity to succeed. The detailed data available ensures the school knows and provides strong support for high achieving students, special education students, and students in most need of support. However, while the school uses rubrics in the classroom, there is limited evidence that they are being used to effectively guide students' next steps. The school provides multiple learning opportunities for parents so they can support their children. Parents and students have access to information related to student assessments, but there is no consistent practice of providing feedback regarding progress. As a result, neither students nor their families can identify next learning steps.

Students engage actively in their work as teachers plan most lessons carefully to meet their needs. However, the school recognizes there is still work to do to ensure that all teachers gain a deeper understanding of differentiation. Professional development activities promote individual and group reflection, and aligns with teacher needs. However, the focus on sharing good practice is not disseminated across the whole staff, nor is it always linked to classroom observations to maximize the impact of evaluation. While there is effective planning at whole school, academy, and departmental levels, procedures are not sufficiently streamlined so that all staff members have voice in determining their next steps in improving their instructional skill level.

Teacher teams collaborate using an inquiry approach to promote shared leadership and improved student learning. Their findings concerning means of driving up achievement in writing are already having an impact across the school. To this end, the school is maximizing the use of common planning time to support teachers and enhance student learning.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Very good partnerships between the school and the extensive support services promote both the academic and personal growth of the students.
 - The school has developed strong partnerships with outside agencies to give students additional opportunities to widen their horizons and extend their talents. As a result, they are challenged and more engaged in a greater variety of instructional enhancements.
 - All teachers at the Clinton Hill School enjoy the professional development and enrichment offer by the Pratt partnership, which allows the school to use art to enhance content offered in core subjects. With this partnership, the school provides opportunities to expand social and emotional growth and to raise standards by accentuating art instruction.
- The school's strategic use of resources is effectively targeted at maximizing learning opportunities for students.
 - The school has very good policies and procedures in place to ensure that all initiatives, programs and operations are effective and run smoothly. The school's timely use of the School Based Option process, Circular 6-R, and master scheduling results in common planning time and enhanced extended day learning opportunities. Consequently, students receive more targeted instructional time to improve academic outcomes.
 - The teachers make effective use of resources, in particular in their use of technology. Hundreds of laptops, and a fully equipped art studio, enhance student-learning opportunities and engage them in active learning.
- Teacher teams collaborate professionally using an effective inquiry approach that results in distributed leadership opportunities and improved student-learning outcomes.
 - Teacher teams use common planning time to collaborate frequently and carefully utilize the disaggregated data student assessment data and student portfolios. They then develop differentiated instructional and intervention strategies during the course of weekly meetings. This enables teachers to use a variety of lenses to obtain a realistic view of each individual student's strengths and areas of need. Additionally, a greater number of teachers are assuming greater leadership roles, such as department leaders, project leaders, and data specialist. As a result, teachers are motivated and feel a sense of ownership for school initiatives and programs.
- Professional development activities promote individual and group reflection to have a direct impact on teachers' ability to revise their practice in a timely fashion.

- Well-designed professional development activities provide opportunities for teachers to improve their instructional skills. For example, learning to use the Renzulli model and Smartboard technology facilitates is enabling the school to achieve its goal of optimizing student-learning outcomes.
- Professional development activities are differentiated to meet the needs of seasoned teachers and less experienced staff based on data, skills, and interest, resulting in teachers implementing instructional strategies that are more effective.
- Relationships within the school community among school leaders, teachers, and students are warm and respectful, resulting in an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.
 - The administration has developed a strong communication system across the school to give the students and teachers every opportunity to widen their level of input into school decision-making, and to know that their views are respected. Thus, the entire community is kept abreast of decisions affecting teaching and learning and everyone an opportunity to communicate with school leaders.
 - Students are highly motivated by being involved in planning meetings and respond well to ownership in some decision-making. As a result, they are conduct themselves well, act responsibly and show interest in learning.
- Parents are meaningful partners in their children's education and school leaders and faculty maintain open lines of communication to keep them well informed about programs and instructional needs.
 - High expectations for student engagement and participation are conveyed to families throughout the school term. Parents and students receive report cards, when possible, in person at parent-teacher conferences. Parents value the many opportunities to discuss their children's progress and their next steps in learning. Consequently, they are in a better position to support their children's academic needs.
 - The school disseminates written communications that outline behavioral, academic, and attendance expectations. This coupled with meetings of the parent teacher association and workshops for parents allows for deeper discussions about how families can support students in meeting goals. Teachers define clear expectations for students and their parents by distributing school rules and grading policies

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that rubrics in core content areas are used consistently to assess work in order to identify next steps and that rubrics are developed for assessing student work in the area of speaking and listening.
 - While teachers display rubrics in classrooms, there is limited evidence that they use them to direct next steps so that students can easily reflect on what standards they should focus on to achieve in all subject areas.

- The school has developed rubrics for assessing student work in all core content areas; however, students' progress and work are not easily reviewed and evaluated in the areas of listening and speaking. As a result, students are not always clear about how to gauge their progress.
- Develop teachers' understanding of differentiation so that they can improve their teaching practice to meet students' individual needs.
 - Individualized professional development activities, aligned with teacher goals and needs, are identified through frequent informal and formal classroom observations by the principal, assistant principal, and coaches. However, teachers do not consistently differentiate the work that students are expected to do which means that not all students receive the right level of challenge to address their individual needs.
 - The school's comprehensive pacing guides in all core content areas underpin the delivery of standards-based instruction. Lessons generally promote student engagement, standards-based activities, and the regular monitoring of student performance. However, teachers do not utilize data well to precisely identify student needs in order to clearly identify appropriate entry points which means that the work is too easy for some and too difficult for others.
- Streamline all long-term planning and monitoring systems to ensure professional development planning has a school-wide focus with measurable, time-limited goals involving all stakeholders.
 - The school has not established effective strategies to ensure that the evaluation of teaching and its impact on student work informs long-term professional development strategies. The school recognizes that there is still work to be done to ensure that they provide the right supports for teachers to meet a range of needs.
 - Professional development aligns with teachers' needs, but the focus on sharing good practice is not disseminated across the whole staff. While effective planning is evident at whole school, academy, and departmental levels, the principal recognizes that procedures are not sufficiently streamlined to enable staff to have in-put at every level.
- Provide consistent feedback to families on their children's progress and identify clear next steps to help them reach their goals.
 - Parents state they are in constant communication with the school to support their children's needs on a number of matters. However, there is little evidence that the school shares student progress data with parents, which limits parents' ability to support their children, achieve their goals.
 - The administration and teachers are at the beginning stages of helping parents to use tools such as ARIS Parent Link to keep them informed about their children's performance and next learning steps.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Clinton Hill School	△	▷	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		X		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▶	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?		X					
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	▶	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals 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 progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	▶	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			X				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X					
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	▶	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed