

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Asher Levy

Elementary School M019

**185 1st Avenue
New York
NY 10003**

Principal: Jacqueline Flanagan

Dates of review: March 23 - 24, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Janine Caffrey

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Asher Levy is an elementary school with 326 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 25% Black, 53% Hispanic, 9% White, and 11% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 91.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school has a warm, focused learning environment where all members of the learning community demonstrate respect for themselves and one another. The principal has established high expectations and clearly articulated goals, including one for attendance, that are based on careful analysis of data. Data is used to monitor learning and adjust practices in support of raising student achievement.

The reading curriculum is rigorous, differentiated, and includes great opportunities for students, parents, and teachers to work toward progress through a shared language regarding assessments and strategies. As a result, the school has made large gains in reading proficiency, as evident on State tests. The percentage of students meeting grade level expectations has moved from 57% to 76% in just one year. The writing curriculum is based on a similar workshop model as reading. However, students do not have access to assessment tools that allow self-reflection, collaborative thinking, or communication regarding progress. As a result, most students have made little to no gains in writing this year. The Everyday Math curriculum is used consistently across all grades, and differentiation is evident. However, higher functioning students have very little rigor in their instruction. Students were not able to articulate the relevance of math. When asked why they were learning math, almost all students responded that they needed to learn it so they could pass the tests.

The school provides detailed information to parents regarding student achievement, and provides frequent activities to help them understand what their children are learning. However, parents are not engaged in reciprocal conversations with teachers that would improve collaborative efforts to improve learning.

All teachers are included in professional learning communities, organized into grade level teams. Each team has common planning time daily, and meets each Thursday to discuss student performance and ensure that curricula across each grade are consistent. However, the practice of inquiry is not fully established, having been implemented only in January. Therefore, teachers are still in the beginning stages of understanding and using the inquiry process to affect student learning.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school manifests high levels of respect among all constituents, resulting in a safe, calm learning environment where students express a love of learning.
 - A combination of guidance staff, advisory classes, and ongoing adult conversation, create an environment where every student is known well and a safety net ensures that no student “falls through the cracks.”
 - Students, faculty, and staff all speak to each other in calm, caring tones and work to help each other learn in a variety of settings. A positive, polite, cheerful approach is used in human interactions.
- The principal has created a learning community that is well focused on student outcomes with a vision to continue to accelerate learning.
 - The school engaged in a rigorous analysis of State test results prior to the beginning of the school year, resulting in the establishment of concise achievement goals and coherent expectations for learning gains, particularly in the area of writing.
 - School goals are evident in key documents including the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan, the principal’s performance review, and professional learning community minutes. This allows all constituents to be kept in the loop around school foci.
- Staff gather a range of relevant data across English language arts and math to understand school level, individual student and relevant subgroup performance, progress and learning needs.
 - The principal’s use of data supported the establishment and implementation of a system for grouping students and setting daily learning objectives. Using this method allows teachers to organize and utilize classroom level and individual student data, which has resulted in differentiated instruction in English language arts and math.
 - The principal participates in data analysis discussions with each grade level team at least once per month to get relevant feedback, resulting in a culture that values using data to improve student achievement.
- Teachers and coaches use collaborative, data-informed processes for planning and goal setting across the grades in English language arts and math so that individuals and targeted groups of students reach individualized goals.
 - Teachers and coaches update individual student data daily in English language arts and math, resulting in targeted instructional time, and timely identification of support needs.
 - Teachers, especially in English language arts, use periodic assessments to identify trends in subgroups, resulting in increased academic progress.
- The school prioritizes the workshop model, flexible grouping, and the adjustment of curriculum and instruction, resulting in academic gains.

- Students work collaboratively in small groups that are strategically formed leading to differentiation of instruction with multiple entry points. This strategy resulted in increased academic progress.
- Students are able to clearly articulate their reading levels (instructional and independent), discuss how their reading has improved, what their next learning steps in reading are, and what reading tools they utilize. These strategies led to students' ownership of their work and excitement in engaging with texts with increasing complexity.
- School leaders and teacher teams monitor their goals to measure progress resulting in ongoing adjustment of instructional strategies to support student learning.
 - Progress for the whole school and student subgroups is tracked by the leadership team, which looks at a variety of data to monitor progress toward specific schoolwide goals. This ongoing evaluation results in adjustments to instructional practice within individual teacher teams to better support student learning.
 - Teacher teams utilize data in their grade level meetings to track progress. Through constant monitoring, they identified obstacles to learning and shared practices to overcome these obstacles. This resulted in ongoing adjustment and the development of internal expertise that led to stronger outcomes in student learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the rigor of the core curriculum so that students are challenged consistently across all grades and subject areas.
 - Although the reading curriculum provides for rigor and is engaging for students, those same levels of rigor do not appear consistently across the curriculum. This led to uneven progress in student learning outside of reading.
 - Higher-level students in math routinely engage in math games related to the skills they have already acquired, as they wait for other students to master these skills. However, many of these students are unable to demonstrate the skills they previously learned through the use of these games. The math curriculum is not integrated with relevant "real world" activities, science, or technology, and generally caters to the students with the lowest skill levels in the class. Most students reported that they needed to learn math so they could pass the tests at the end of the year, and could not articulate any uses for math in their own lives.
- Deepen the inquiry work of teacher teams so that teachers translate data analysis into action in all classrooms throughout the school.
 - Although teachers are organized into grade level teams, with common planning time, they are not yet fully engaged in inquiry, having begun their work in the middle of January. As a result, the impact of the inquiry initiative cannot yet be ascertained relative to student progress.
 - Teachers have a basic understanding of the concept of inquiry. However, their approach at this point is limited to trial and error of instructional strategies to address individual teaching points. They lack an

understanding of how to develop the essential questions that will allow them to improve their own practice on a meaningful level, and do not utilize existing literature to address particular issues.

- Expand the communication of data with students and their families so that reflective, reciprocal conversations regarding student progress may occur consistently throughout the year.
 - Although the principal is providing parents with a wide variety of achievement data, and working with them to access ARIS Parent Link, parents are not yet able to interpret information and use it to take action that will lead to improvement of their child's performance. Parents could identify their children's reading levels, according to the school's curriculum, but could not discuss whether their children were progressing as expected.
 - Although students are able to clearly discuss their progress in reading, they are not yet able to do the same in writing. The principal and faculty report that writing rubrics are utilized for writing; however, these are not available for students. Writing checklists are evident in classrooms, but students are unable to read or apply the checklists to support them in their work.
- Further develop processes for evaluating data collection tools so those tools are refined to identify the specific strategies that are leading to progress toward school goals.
 - Currently the school has a variety of assessment tools to measure progress in writing. Because these tools are not coherent and aligned with each other, the school cannot accurately pinpoint the impact of their work.
 - Although student attendance has been a major focus this year, the principal has not worked together with faculty to track classroom level data to improve in this area. Further, there has not been a detailed examination of data to identify trends across days of the week or time of year. This lack of systems to disaggregate data across classrooms resulted in difficulty in identifying potential leverage opportunities.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Asher Levy	Δ	▶	✓	+
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>	Δ	▶	✓	+
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>	Δ	▶	✓	+
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