

# Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**Joyce Keld Briarwood School**

**Elementary School 117**

**85 – 15 143 Street  
Queens  
NY 11435**

**Principal: Paula Cunningham**

**Dates of review: February 24 - 25, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Linda Trifon**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Joyce Keld Briarwood School is an elementary school with 1,244 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 13% Black, 31% Hispanic, 17% White, and 39% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 93.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is well developed.**

Strong leadership has propelled the Joyce Keld Briarwood School to become a vibrant community well focused on accelerating student learning and creating a positive and nurturing learning environment. "A community is being formed," stated a parent. The school's strategic organizational and instructional decisions are instrumental in its success. The curriculum, aligned with key standards, provides students with engaging learning experiences. However, differentiated lessons do not always lead to high levels of student engagement. The tasks assigned do not consistently challenge all students and teacher questioning does not push student thinking to high levels.

All teachers are engaged in collaborative inquiry. Teams of teachers consistently meet to analyze student-learning outcomes. They share effective instructional practices and plan differentiated lessons to target specific needs of students to improve student learning. School leaders participate in the team meetings, enabling them to evaluate the effectiveness and provide support and guidance as needed. Classroom observations, the examination of student work and the analysis of formative and summative data drive the school's professional development plan. Teachers have multiple opportunities to visit each other's classrooms and other schools to learn specific strategies to meet student needs. Implementation of new learning has accelerated student performance. One teacher shared, "Teachers are reflective of their practice and have opened their classrooms for intervisitation."

The entire school community shares the school's cohesive vision for student achievement. The school embeds data analysis in its curriculum. The use of a wide variety of tools enables teachers to identify student-learning needs. The consistent analysis of data has enabled teachers to pinpoint instruction to meet student needs and accelerate learning. Formal feedback to students and families is inconsistent throughout the grades, thus preventing families from providing precise support at home to ensure their child meets his or her learning goal. The school has not yet achieved consistency in evaluating whether the data collected and organized is being used effectively, thus preventing the school from acquiring an accurate picture of the instructional needs of students.

The school has high expectations for attendance, behavior and academics. The extracurricular activities and support programs firmly established enable students to achieve their learning goals. Parents and families participate in many workshops designed to assist them with effectively helping their child at home. One parent shared, "We can definitely feel the support."

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The energetic and dynamic principal has established a mutually supportive learning community that meets the needs of students and families.
  - o The strong spirit of cooperation and collaboration promotes a scholarly tone in the school. The on-going support given to teachers sharpens practice, resulting in accelerated student performance. Resources and supports necessary to succeed are provided to teachers. The United Federation of Teachers chapter leader stated, “The principal helps the teachers understand what they’re doing and why they are doing it. We’re so happy she’s here!” Focused support provided to students propels them forward to ensure the achievement of their goals. One student, shared, “We get a lot of help. Our teachers are our second Moms.”
  - o The school’s heightened awareness of acts of kindness sustains the respectful tone in the building. The guidance counselor participates in student assemblies and models lessons for teachers to demonstrate effective strategies. Teachers collaborate to discuss discipline issues and implement strategies, eliminating the need to suspend students automatically. The various after-school clubs meet the academic and social needs of students. A plethora of workshops are provided to parents to equip them with strategies on how to deal with the social, emotional and learning needs of their child at home. As one parent shared, “There is a lot of support for parents and tons of workshops!”
- Leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school and evaluate and revise as necessary.
  - o The principal’s decision to revamp the English language arts program to provide a more balanced approach to learning literacy has resulted in greater student achievement. Resources have been re-allocated to support the teaching and learning of literacy, and teacher assignments are aligned to improving student outcomes.
  - o The analysis of student learning outcomes confirms that not all students are making sufficient progress. The determination to adjust the instructional program for English language learners, moving from a pull-out to a push-in program, enables classroom teachers to collaborate and plan with second language teachers. This results in teachers learning effective instructional strategies and students making significant progress.
- The school’s embedded culture of inquiry fosters collaboration and focuses on improving student achievement.
  - o Every teacher participates in the school’s firmly established teacher teams. All teams meet regularly to lead, collaborate, share practices, deeply discuss students’ strengths and needs, and plan differentiated instruction. “The eleven teacher teams are strength to the school,” stated the principal.

- o Using an inquiry approach, teachers analyze assessment data and student work, adjusting their instructional program and assessments to meet the needs of students. The principal shared, "Teacher teams have resulted in more collaboration giving teachers a laser beam focus!"
- The school uses a process of self-selection and classroom observations to provide an array of professional development opportunities for teachers to enable them to meet school goals and student needs.
  - o The school utilizes teacher data and the analysis of student work to inform their professional development decisions. School leaders expect teachers to bring their lesson plans and prior student assessments to their observation meetings. Specific feedback at these conferences leads to the development of targeted strategy lessons that meet student needs.
  - o Teachers show great support for the varied programs of professional development that assist them in improving their students' results. Differentiated support has resulted in stronger teacher practice and improved student performance. Days are set aside during the year for teachers to visit other teachers and/or attend training sessions where they learn effective instructional techniques that improve learning outcomes.
- The school uses a wide variety of tools to gather assessment data and analyze student-learning outcomes enabling them to make informed decisions at the school level and classroom level.
  - o The effective use of structured time enables teams of teachers to analyze a wide range of data. Running records, conference notes, end of unit tests and specialized software provide a plethora of data about student learning outcomes. These assessments drive the instructional decisions enabling teachers to pinpoint areas of student need.
  - o Analysis of formative and summative data found in ARIS, Acuity Predictives and NYSESLAT confirmed that second language learners were not making sufficient progress. The principal shared, "If we change the conditions of learning, we should see growth." Hence, the school's decision to strengthen and re-structure the second language learner program has accelerated student growth beyond the school's expectations.
- School leaders' evaluation of the effectiveness of structured collaborative teams ensures their work has a positive impact on student progress.
  - o The core team consists of teacher leaders from the school's eleven teacher teams. Team leaders share the student learning outcomes of their respective teams enabling school leaders to determine the rate of student progress. Using the Inquiry Capacity Continuum, the team reflects on practice resulting in self-assessment and professional goal setting that will sharpen their leadership skills. School leaders seize this opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the teams and the acceleration of student progress identifying supports to ensure coherence across the school that will further improve student achievement.
  - o School leaders regularly meet to examine and discuss the effectiveness of teacher practice. Student data, information gleaned from teacher team meetings and classroom observations informs the school's decision-

making around capacity building. For example, when administrators analyzed data and determined that students were not making significant progress in certain areas, the professional development was restructured to provide learning opportunities around small group instruction, resulting in greater student achievement.

- The school's goals include continued reinforcement of its high expectations for attendance, behavior and academics to ensure students and families are effectively involved.
  - o The school engages in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding its high expectations for behavior, attendance and student learning. Student learning objectives for each subject and the expected goals to be achieved by the end of units of study are explained in monthly newsletters sent home to families.
  - o Parents of targeted students are invited to participate in parent workshops to learn specific strategies on how to support their children. The impact has been significant as attendees receive first-hand knowledge of how to provide specific support to their children at home.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Refine the structures used in providing feedback to students and families to include next learning steps, to ensure that students are reflective learners, can assess their progress and all families know how they can assist at home.
  - o Teachers' feedback about student progress and the achievement of learning outcomes is inconsistent across the grades and subjects. This lack of precise feedback with specific ways to achieve next learning steps limits student self-assessment and hinders the ability of parents to assist their children to achieve their learning goals.
- Deepen differentiated instruction to ensure that teaching strategies provide entry points for all learners and learning activities lead to high levels of student engagement and thinking.
  - o The school utilizes data to establish groups based on performance or skill, and teachers differentiate instruction. However, not all teaching strategies ensure entry points and extensions for all learners. Tasks are not sufficiently challenging for all students, resulting in uneven levels of engagement, and teachers' questions do not always lead to high levels of student thinking.
- Expand the present data monitoring systems to evaluate whether the information gathered is measured accurately and the performance data shared with students and families helps to accelerate student learning.
  - o The school does not yet have systems in place to evaluate whether assessment practices and tools provide an accurate picture of what the students need to know and what they have learned. This limits the school's ability to ensure cohesiveness and alignment. As of yet, the school does not evaluate whether this data is shared with students and families in ways that ensure that students understand what their next learning steps are in order to achieve success.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Joyce Keld Briarwood School	△	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score				X
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<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
<b>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.</b>				
<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

<b>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.</b>							
<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			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				<b>X</b>			
<b>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.</b>							
<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			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				<b>X</b>			
<b>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.</b>							
<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			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				<b>X</b>			
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>