

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Florence Nightingale School**

**Elementary School 110**

**285 Delancey Street  
New York  
NY 10002**

**Principal: Karen Feuer**

**Dates of review: December 15 - 16, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Daniella Phillips**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Florence Nightingale School is an elementary school with 473 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 16% Black, 46% Hispanic, 24% White, and 14% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.3%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders make smart organizational decisions that elevate coherence of practices and improve students' learning.
  - With reduced budget, the school applied for and received a three-year GLOBE (Guided Learning through Our Built Environment) grant which provides the school with a mentor to support seven classroom teachers in teaching critical thinking and problem-solving skills to students. This partnership grant aligns well with the school's goal of raising academic standards and students express great enthusiasm for "real world" learning using New York City as their backdrop. First graders, for example, visit and research several local playgrounds before designing their own model playground, a project that engages students creatively and strengthens their measurement skills.
  - School leaders pursue innovative scheduling to create multiple blocks of time for teachers to meet and work together. As a result, all grade teams plan and pace their lessons collectively which improves instructional consistency. School leaders also pair teachers strategically in collaborative team teaching classes which has led to more targeted instruction for students with special needs.
- Teachers use student assessment data sensibly and effectively so that instructional planning meets students' needs.
  - School leaders are explicit in expecting all teachers to pre-assess students' knowledge at the start of units of study. Teachers consistently do so and then compact curricula to reflect students' needs. This use of baseline assessments has led to purposeful, revisions in their Teachers' College units of study in reading and writing. In addition, teachers make good use of item analysis in knowing keenly what individual and groups of students need to develop further. Nearly 20% of students in grades three through five achieved below proficiency on a recent Acuity periodic assessment, yet a full cycle of extended day instruction produced steady improvements for this group.
- Students demonstrate good levels of engagement across classrooms with effective differentiation strategies of small group learning and altering assignments.
  - Teachers routinely incorporate student choice and different modalities that lead to high student interest. For example, first graders create a sorting game, third graders design and narrate a passport trip through Africa, and fourth graders draw maps to scale of school. There are sufficient planned examples of supports, including graphic organizers, and altered assignments, that challenge struggling and accelerated learners at the right levels.
  - Classroom instruction consistently follows a workshop model approach whereby students spend much of their time working in small groups, pairs or independently. Most students appear very engaged in their learning tasks and they speak excitedly of favorite projects, such as designing data posters and building model houses. As a result, there is a positive buzz of students' learning in classrooms and improved student work on display in hallways and portfolios.

- School leaders prioritize the observation of classroom teaching with frequent and constructive feedback that reinforces instructional consistency in classrooms.
  - The principal and assistant principal invest thoroughly in providing every teacher with specific and constructive feedback on classroom lessons. This team of administrators is unafraid to make difficult performance evaluation decisions, yet they also recognize the time needed for changes to take root. As a result, teaching practices at the school are mostly effective and teacher's capacity has strengthened. For example, teachers have shared responsibility for turn-keying professional development and newer teachers receive ample support.
- School leaders and staff model and convey high expectations to students and parents, resulting in informed parents eager to participate in school life.
  - Staff communicate high expectations to students for academic performance and personal development. There is a good sense of school community, including a more respectful tone in recess programs, a student-run recycling program, and multiple opportunities to celebrate student accomplishments. The student attendance rate so far this school year is up 2.1% to 96.4% and early indications from students' performance on predictive assessments show an upward trend in English language arts and math.
  - Parents' presence in the school is strong as they volunteer daily to operate the school library, attend regular publishing parties and events that celebrate students' learning, and voice concerns and questions at well-attended parent meetings. Teachers update parents effectively via newsletters and postings on the school's website, in addition to conferences. As a result, there is a growing cycle of positive parent advocacy and engagement at the school.
- There is strong investment and accountability in teacher teams so that adult learning and professional development deepens teachers' capacity.
  - Teachers participate regularly in inquiry work as grade-level teams with one teacher designated as liaison for the group. By utilizing common protocols, all teacher teams engage in similar process, although to varying degrees of effectiveness. To address the variation, school leaders and teacher liaisons highlight exemplary work and then showcase that to all faculty in order to spread improved teacher collaborations.
  - The school serves as a math lab site for its affiliated network which enables teachers to receive professional development at no additional cost to the school. Two new positions of math teacher leaders have been created with teachers assuming the assignments and taking on greater responsibilities for improved instructional practices, a key example of distributed leadership.

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

- Make urgent the monitoring of instruction and supports for struggling learners, especially English language learners and students with special needs, to accelerate their progress.
  - School leaders recognize that English language learners and students with special needs lag significantly behind in their academic progress, yet two

important interventions have not yet started. The academy for English language learners and *Navigator* math intervention for students in grades 2 and above are anticipated to begin in January which delays the potential impact on the school's most struggling learners.

- The extended day program is in its third cycle of implementation and a good number of teachers use that time productively in targeted work with students. However, this is not the case across all classrooms, as some students read independently with little interaction or monitoring by some teachers. Therefore, these students do not benefit from guided practice to improve their skills and understanding.
- Improve school-wide systems for assessing student learning and organizing student data to understand better instructional next steps.
  - Staff review to good extent student achievement and assessment data in major subjects at regular intervals. Additionally, teachers use rubrics effectively to evaluate students' writing and reading comprehension, but they miss opportunities to develop rubrics in other subject areas. Moreover, there are too few examples of performance-based assessments to capture fully students' skills and knowledge. Thus students' targeted needs are not addressed.
  - Teachers compile at-a-glance overviews of students' achievement in reading, writing, math, and science which are shared as grade teams and with administrators. However, math data is limited to end-of-unit assessments, which means the school lacks a robust picture of group trends and individual student needs in math. Whereas the data specialist develops charts which show clearly how students' and subgroups' reading levels fare compared with benchmarks, there is not an equivalent close tracking of math.
- Fine-tune student goal setting, so the process occurs fluidly and strategically over the course of the year and using sensible language that students and families understand clearly.
  - A major school-wide initiative has been the recording of student goals and academic progress six times a year followed by a dynamic process of sharing this information with families. However, parents state that the language used in the reports is often not user-friendly or easy to understand. Furthermore, the data collected in this manner does not match when unit studies or intervention cycles end. School leaders are interested in adjusting how and when these student goals reports occur to coincide more with instructional and curricular decisions, as well as to inform interim goal setting for the whole school.
- Deepen vertical planning of curricula to raise expectations at each grade level.
  - In June 2010, teachers collaborated with support from their resourceful literacy coach on mapping curricula using essential questions and specifying learning experiences across grade levels. This vertical planning appears most successful in poetry, non-fiction and personal narrative units, where text complexity is deliberately increased as students move up grade levels and where standards for students' work products are rigorous. While all major content areas have adequate levels of challenge for the diverse range of students, there is more work to be done in other units of study, especially social studies and science, to layer increasing expectations as students progress to higher grade levels.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Florence Nightingale School</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	

<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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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>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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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>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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>