

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Nathaniel Woodhull**

**Elementary School Q035**

**191-02 90<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11423**

**Principal: Mark Dempsey**

**Dates of review: January 24 – 25, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Nathaniel Woodhull is an elementary school with 622 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 42% Black, 28% Hispanic, 2% White, and 23% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 93.7%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Teams of teachers and individual teachers consistently gather and analyze classroom level data to clarify individual students' strengths and needs to refine their instructional decisions and improve student performance.
  - Teacher teams collaborate on the selection and development of assessments to determine the progress of their students on a weekly basis. The assessments are often tied to units of instruction and pacing calendars. The teachers are therefore able to determine the efficacy of the decisions they make to re-teach topics that cover literacy skills and have tracked steady improvement in the majority of their students.
  - Teachers utilize the Periodic Assessment data to determine the progress of English language learners, students with disabilities and struggling students in the bottom third. They have identified the need for enhanced vocabulary development, greater fluency and text comprehension, which has led to better student response than the previous year.
- School leaders make proactive performance evaluation, tenure and retention decisions based on analysis of student work and classroom observations to enhance teacher growth.
  - School leaders visit classrooms systematically using formal and informal classroom observations, an analysis of student data and student work to provide specific feedback. They meet with teachers individually every few weeks and monthly as a grade. This leads to awareness among teachers of their areas for improvement in order to target teacher growth.
  - The school leaders provide supports both within and outside the school building from content area network specialists, the literacy coach, the curriculum managers and teacher teams. Most of this support is job embedded during actual lessons. Newer teachers receive additional support from buddy teachers and mentors as needed. These opportunities have led to a common instructional focus that increases teacher competencies.
- The school has developed school level goals that align with the school's vision and facilitate action plans that improve student performance trends.
  - The school has a short list of clear, focused school level goals and action plans that are reflected in the comprehensive education plan and address the areas of need in literacy, English language learner progress and the use of differentiation. This has resulted in a sharper focus for a school effort in guided reading.
  - The school does a comprehensive data driven needs assessment before developing their goals and action plans. School leaders and faculty have identified the areas for immediate improvement, including the school tone and communication, relational trust among the school community, and

utilizing literacy as the basis for all instruction. This has led to some progress in the dialogue to improve student performance.

- Teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations that meet regularly to analyze students' data and work to accelerate academic achievement.
  - A majority of teachers belong to grade level teams that met twice a month to identify struggling students who need increased intervention. As a result, classroom teachers actively intervene with targeted students using guided reading and strategy lessons. Teachers have identified an improvement in student performance from unit assessment data.
  - Teacher teams examine student assessment results and take a systematic approach to looking at student work. This has resulted in specific instructional strategies where students are gathered in small groups for re-teaching. Students are also required to write their answers to diagnostic questions composed by their teachers that have shown increased comprehension skills.
- The school attempts to align its instructional goals with its daily programming, distribution of resources and scheduling of regular teacher team meeting time to increase students' academic growth.
  - The school is developing alignment between the use of resources and the school's instructional goals. The school has a literacy coach who works with teachers in their classrooms with dated computer equipment and limited literacy materials to support the curriculum. This has led to teachers share classroom libraries and using curriculum material from the Internet to push students' performance.
  - The school has begun rolling out a positive behavior intervention system to assist teachers and students with implementing effective schoolwide interventions. Students have access to clubs organized around topics of interest and find that their class assignments and homework are generally effortless. As a result, the school continues to evolve in its decision making around instructional and organizational choices.

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

- Increase the consistency and coherence of the school's curricula so that all students are stretched and challenged to increase achievement.
  - The school's curriculum managers team aligns curricula to State standards and has decided to emphasize the skills that are most often tested. Some teachers demonstrate that the curriculum outlines are unclear and the materials that support them are inadequate and insufficiently rigorous leading to large inconsistencies in teaching and student results.
- Extend the consistency of teaching practices and differentiated learning opportunities for students across all classrooms to increase student engagement and achievement.

- Some classrooms are organized with flexible student groups and are differentiated in teaching and learning options. However, this is inconsistent across the school. Some teachers use strategy lessons with a small struggling group of students while the other students work independently on assignments of varying difficulty. Other classrooms have students who are not engaged and produce work of uneven quality particularly with student writing which diminishes achievement.
- Develop consistent, reliable techniques for gathering and analyzing data that provides quality information on academic results to improve student outcomes.
  - School leaders and faculty are inconsistent in the gathering and analysis of summative data. The leadership is concerned with the decline in fifth grade scores that place the school well below the district average. Teachers were reorganized to different grades without looking at teaching strategies. Although, the Periodic Assessment and classroom level data on student subgroups is available, it is not yet discussed with sufficient clarity to precisely delineate the next steps of improvement for students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Communicate higher, more challenging expectations and goals to students and families to increase parent engagement and student achievement throughout the school.
  - School leaders communicate high expectations to parents through backpack notices, phone calls, e-mail and at parent meetings and workshops. Parents and students admit that students could be challenged much more and that the schoolwork is too easy, leading to inadequate student achievement.
  - The school administration and faculty attend parent meetings and explain how school level decisions are made. However, school leadership team meetings are poorly attended and most decisions end up being made unilaterally by school administration. Without parent engagement in the decision making process student achievement is stagnated as parents help their children sporadically.
- Further develop systems that evaluate the school's leadership development efforts and structures to facilitate distributed leadership.
  - The principal is working to have the curriculum managers monitor the collaborative work of the grade level teams, yet the grade level agendas and process of the team meetings are determined by the administration. Without data to measure the effectiveness of teacher teams the school struggles to make the necessary improvements for growth.
  - The principal is constantly looking for leadership ability in the staff but through a non-systemic way. Teachers and coaches request appointments with administration to volunteer their efforts to promote initiatives in music, clubs and extracurricular activities and teachers e-mail the administration with suggestions for changes in grade leadership and responsibilities. However, inconsistent approaches to leadership development have resulted throughout the building.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Nathaniel Woodhull</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?			<b>X</b>				
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?		<b>X</b>					
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>					
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?		<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>	<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?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>				
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<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>	<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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		<b>X</b>					
<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>