

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**Richard Arkwright**

**Elementary School Q091**

**68-10 Central Avenue**

**Queens**

**NY 11385**

**Principal: Victoria Catalano**

**Dates of review: May 16-17, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Madelene Chan**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Richard Arkwright is an elementary school with 844 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 51% Hispanic, 38% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 92.8%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has developed a very strong and comprehensive curriculum that connects across grades and subjects, fortifying student learning at high levels.
  - The school has implemented a set of key standards pertaining to comprehension, writing strategies, and alternate math processes that are commonly known across the grades. These standards are fused into the curriculum and utilized by teachers to measure student growth over time. These practices have brought a greater awareness to the staff of English language learners' (ELLs) needs and specific skills, like decoding, inferences, and computation alternatives, needed to improve reading and math proficiency.
  - The implementation of a writing continuum has enabled staff to gain specific strategies around students' narrative writing and non-fiction content that has helped students develop practices to support independent learning and higher order skills. Since the school has sustained this curriculum, student performance on writing assessments has increased by 1-3 proficiency levels on each grade level.
- Instructional coherence and differentiated practices are a direct outgrowth of strong teacher pedagogy that targets student progress throughout the school.
  - Teaching practices using a balanced literacy approach through guided reading and individual conferencing has created a strong connection between learning applications and how students learn best. Regular discussions at the team and school level enable teachers to assist students in need of math and reading improvement to make advances on pre and post assessments. Students with disabilities have benefited from this practice by increasing their reading by 2 to 4 levels.
  - Strong evidence of differentiated instruction is clear in the guided, individual, and flexible groupings. The utilization of various computer programs, like Study Island and Raz Kids, in addition to individual reading conferences between student and teacher, has enabled students to gain access to the curriculum at multiple entry points. As well, students produce work that caters to their needs and mastery levels resulting in a 3-5% increase in reading proficiency levels across grades.
- The principal's commitment to student achievement is clearly noted in the advantageous and creative use of budget, technology, teacher assignments, and student groups.
  - ELLs are innovatively grouped by ability levels and ELL specialists provide demonstrated skills in moving this subgroup forward. Students benefiting from enrichment support receive additional services in advanced areas of literacy that is linked to classroom lessons. As a result, classroom instruction is creatively tailored to meet the needs of all students and scheduling allows teachers to meet regularly to improve instructional practices.
  - The principal uses grant monies to strengthen the level of instruction, focusing on reading comprehension and student engagement, books that highlight informational text on students' levels and technology used to enhance instruction. After careful analysis of the ELL subgroup, a literacy computer

program was implemented three times daily leading to more text focused reading by students and increased levels of student engagement.

- The school develops and utilizes a wide range of assessments aligned to the school's key chosen standards to analyze student learning outcomes and adjust instructional decisions
  - Weekly meetings of various constituency groups enable staff to thoroughly analyze writing assessments, Acuity, ITAs, and mastery of reading progress. This reinforcement ensures that curricula and instructional decisions meet the varying needs of the students. The executive cabinet regularly monitors the progress of the students using monthly, prescriptive data, so that actionable feedback is part of this process and a clear picture of students' strengths and needs is available.
  - Using a variety of data sources that span over time, teachers have identified that students with disabilities have success in literal comprehension strategies and struggle with inferential skills. By tracking this, teachers have secured more reading interventions for students with disabilities. Results indicate a 13% increase in English proficiency between November and March for these students in grade 3 through grade 5.
- Formal and informal observations in conjunction with learning outcomes strengthen school-wide practices and support individualized teaching needs that promote reflective conversations and professional growth.
  - Teachers benefit from insightful feedback through the observation process that sharpens the consistency of effective teaching practices. Meetings are held with teachers to maintain a cohesive structure and philosophy of learning that is seen throughout the school. Through reflective conversations, the staff has developed an understanding of how students learn best and the necessity to plan for a rigorous learning environment.
  - School leaders analyze classroom observations, student data and work products to make proactive performance evaluations for new staff. The principal provides one to one mentoring on needed instructional strategies to meet the individualized needs of new staff members. Targeted professional development has increased teachers' knowledge about guided reading and student-teacher conferences that are more productive and applicable to the planned lessons.
- The school maintains an environment of trust, respect, and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of its students.
  - The school has an educationally conducive environment aligned to learning with emotional supports for students and staff. The implementation of a Character Education curriculum combining monthly assembly programs with messages about respect, kindness, and patience has been developed to combat bullying and promote equality for all. As a result, incident reports reflecting negative behaviors have decreased.
  - Students are engaged in their learning and feel greatly supported in their efforts to succeed and reach the school's high standards. Student government, art education, and the chess team are just three types of activities that create social emotional learning for students. Reflective sheets attached to students' written work depict the academic development that students have gained from the structures in place.

## What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the connection between ways in which school policies are evaluated so that common practices are enhanced.
  - The review of a multitude of data has led to adjustments in grading practices in terms of rubric revisions. The school is involved in evaluating their current grading practices in connection with ongoing assessment adjustments while linking both to the evolving Common Core Standards so that an integration of expectations can occur.
  - Academic, attendance, and behavioral data is used to make connections between students' progress and social-emotional strides. Evaluations and adjustments are in evidence, but there is a limited focus on building alignment between the use of data tools and structured collaborations so that policies and practices across the school improve.
- Further develop expertise in organizing and sharing a rich array of data to identify trends in academic performance for subgroups, along with benchmarks and tracking tools to help make effective instructional decisions.
  - The staff uses tools to aggregate and organize data to detect trends in student performance and teacher teams work diligently to collect data that reflects the needs of their targeted students. Still, there is an inconsistent amount of data collection around student performance trends in a succinct and comprehensive manner for clear next steps to make effective instructional decisions.
- Deepen the evaluation systems for measuring the effectiveness of professional collaborations and capacity building to support leadership development strategies.
  - A majority of teachers are involved in inquiry and team work to increase the proficiency levels of students' scores and improve teaching skills. Currently teacher teams are developing practices to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams, but the system is not yet transparent.
  - The school is currently developing a plan to connect the data collected throughout the year and the effectiveness of teacher placement with capacity building. Without systems that regularly evaluate the school's leadership development opportunities, the strategic matching of teachers' expertise with students' strengths and needs is hindered.
- Ensure the achievement of students' learning goals by tracking data and effectively communicating adjustments to school-wide plans.
  - Summative and formative assessments are used to track students' progress and goals are communicated to the school community. It is unclear whether the information being disseminated has had a positive impact on the adjustments made to school-wide plans and goals.
  - Periodic assessments and classroom level tools are used to track progress and adjust plans for student subgroups to achieve learning goals. However, a variety of data around attendance, safety, and discipline have not been fully incorporated into the tracking process, limiting the opportunity to get the best possible picture of each student's performance.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Richard Arkwright 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?			<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>