



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Clara Cardwell School

Elementary-Middle School 308

**616 Quincy Street
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Dr Gail Bell-Baptiste

Dates of review: March 26 - 28, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Vic Chaffey

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Clara Cardwell School is an elementary school with 850 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 85% Black, 10% Hispanic, 4% Asian and 1% White students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 42% of the students enrolled and girls account for 58%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 95% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Parents and students recognize that the school has high expectations for all who attend.
- The school uses its data in an exemplary way to understand the progress of individual students, classes and grades
- All teachers including those who are new to the school receive excellent professional support and guidance.
- Staff support and collaborate very well with each other and this improves teacher knowledge and classroom performance.
- The school's discipline and guidance structures create an environment where teachers can teach and students learn.
- Displays of student work in and around the school celebrate and promote high standards of students' work.
- The leadership vision and guidance of the principal is pivotal in the school's quest to do the very best it can for all its students.
- Good communication between school and home supports student learning and progress.
- The school addresses the needs of individual students who require extra support very well and this helps them to make progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue the development of differentiated teaching and learning styles by building on established good practice found in the lower school.
- Look more rigorously at past performance so it can better inform and strengthen present practice.
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's seminar program to ensure it supports the learning and development of all students
- Develop long-term planning by setting realistic, achievable whole-school goals and use these to measure progress through regular review and monitoring.
- Further, develop the excellent data system to understand the progress of subgroups within the school, particularly gender and ethnic groups.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

During the past year, the school has much improved its collection and analysis of assessment data. It now has a very clear view of the achievement and progress of individual students, classes and grades. Its use of data to provide more information on the progress of different groups of students is not as effective. Professional development in the interpretation and use of data has been highly successful, so much so that the Department of Education has recognized the school's good practice.

Support for teachers' classroom practice is very good, and professional development, lesson observations and peer support all play a part in raising achievement. Younger students often benefit from lessons that use many different teaching and learning styles, however these methods are used far less frequently in other classes. As a result, in these classes instruction does not always meet the needs of all students, particularly lower achieving students and those at the highest achievement levels. The school is effective at supporting students in greatest need.

Clara Cardwell is a child-centered school. It does particularly well in the way it cares for and nurtures every student. Students, staff and parents hold the principal in very high regard. She and her staff work hard to reinforce the academic and moral standards they wish their students to achieve and these standards are celebrated and reinforced everyday. Parents recognize that the school has high expectations for all its students. The school effectively sets goals for individual students, classes and grades and plans well for the future. However, in its efforts to drive up standards, whole-school goals are set too high and do not relate well to the other goals the school sets.

The school has successfully addressed most of the issues from the last Quality Review. In some areas, like the improvement in the use and understanding of data, it has done exceptionally well. However, there is still work to be done to improve differentiated instruction. The inquiry team has identified a group of students who need extra support in math. These students have all received targeted intervention, but it is yet too early to judge its success.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

Last year's Quality Review raised issues around the school's use and analysis of available data. The school has successfully addressed these and now has highly effective systems to gather information on how well students are performing, so much so that the department of education will feature the school's good practice on its web site. This resulted from a conference between the school's ARIS trainer, a representative from IBM and the data committee. During which the representatives, "were astounded about the connections we were able to make between ARIS, Acuity and student development," and how the school could track students and pair them to various programs.

The school's collection of data includes comparisons of the progress made by different individuals and classes within the grades. These excellent practices also support understanding of the progress of special education and English language learners. However, they are not used with the same effect with other groups in the school, particularly gender and ethnic groups. Although the school does have support for these groups in place, like the Brotherhood and Sisterhood programs, these are not developed in response to data analysis. Consequently, support for these groups is less well targeted than it might be. The school's much improved data analysis procedures are beginning to add more rigor to the process of comparing past performance because they provide greater objectivity.

The principal is a very experienced school leader who understands the benefits of comparing the performance of one school against another. She takes whatever opportunities there are to learn from others, bringing good practice into the school from wherever it is to be found. The school uses "Drop Everything And Read" to raise standards of literacy and the "Suspension Prevention Activities" ensures students at risk of suspension receive the support they need to keep them in the school.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

Teachers plan every student's individual next-step goals in each subject and record them in their "student individual plan folders". Monitoring and review take place through the use of running records and goals are reset as necessary. Monitoring and review of class and grade goals takes place in a nine-week cycle. These systems are effective and work well, contributing to student progress. The setting of school goals is less effective. These are set high, with the objective in mind that all students will improve their grades, but they are often too general and too wide for strategies to be designed for their achievement. In addition, they lack suitable timeframes and interim measures for the school to be able to assess progress toward their achievement.

The school supports its students in the greatest need very well. The school's much improved data systems identify these students and targets support toward meeting their needs. The school's pupil personnel committee with its comprehensive referral and review procedures is very effective in producing interventions that support these students.

The principal is relentless in communicating the high expectations and standards of the school to students and parents. The whole-school community is enthused every day to strive for the very highest standards by the principal's daily address that concentrates on the ABC's of social skills, celebrating high attendance and encouraging students to do their best. She even celebrates students' reading progress by inviting them to join her for

breakfast. Bulleting boards around the school display student work imaginatively and are used to establish and instill goals focused on progress in reading, good behavior, and attendance. Parents are aware of the very high expectations for their children and value the fact that the school concentrates on moral education as well as the academic side of school life. One parent remarked about the staff, "They strive for excellence. Teachers who are here are not just about the pay check." They like the school's open-door policy that allows them quick and easy access to staff. The school also uses progress report and conference sheets to communicate high expectations home.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school works hard to establish a broad and engaging curriculum, which matches scope with sequence and aligns State standards. It annually reviews the curriculum and assesses the need for improvements. The recent introduction of Core Knowledge across the school has addressed perceived gaps in the previous program. The school is imaginative in introducing school-wide initiatives to improve achievement in literacy and math. The Drop Everything and Read Program and Drop Everything and Problem Solve are good examples of these.

The use of different styles of teaching and learning are well established and successfully used in the lower school. Here, student progress is very good because activities target the individual needs of students. The quality of student work displayed in these classes is testament to the achievements of the students. There is some good practice in the upper school. Generally, however, lessons lack the variety of approach that make the lower school so successful, meaning that lessons do not fully support the lower-achieving students or stretch students that are achieving at higher levels. The school has embarked on a program of seminars by subject specialists who make presentations to a grade of students. Although some seminars are very successful, this is not always the case as they are not differentiated sufficiently.

Relationships between staff and students are very good. An experienced teacher new to the school remarked, "Children here have impressed me the most. It is like a family here." The students value the help and support they receive from their teachers and a strong focus on personal development is embedded into the school's culture. The principal uses her considerable experience to ensure budgeting, scheduling and staffing decisions are used together to make an efficient and effective school. For instance, she uses her prior knowledge of the performance, skills and abilities of her staff to place them with classes where their effect will be the greatest.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The administration makes frequent checks on the quality of instruction through formal and informal observations, and walkthroughs by the principal, assistant principals and school leadership team. Staff value both in-house professional development and opportunities to

pursue courses and activities designed to improve their own effectiveness. Targeting professional development toward perceived need is effective. For instance, the school's improved use and understanding of data, is a direct result of this process. New staff are supported very well, having six formal observations in their first year at the school. They also have with a "buddy" teacher and a mentor. Staff work closely together and support each other. They work collaboratively, planning their lessons and supporting each other to improve classroom practice. As one remarked, "Here you're not in it by yourself."

The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. In part this is because of the very good relationships between staff and students, and because the school combines its discipline and guidance regimes. The school has no dean, preferring to use its guidance counselors to support students who have issues concerning relationships or behavior. This system, linked to the work of the pupil personnel committee, Suspension Prevention Activities and the school's daily efforts to remind students of its high expectations, have created a caring institution that supports all of its students.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

Better use of available data has facilitated improved planning this year across the school. This, linked with targeted professional development, has increased the effectiveness of planning for individuals, classes and grades. Hence, the planning to address the individual needs of students is good and the use of the nine-week cycle for classes and grades across subjects is providing a continuous process of review with built-in interim checks on progress. Long-term planning is a strength of the school. A committee of interested staff, under the leadership of the principal, meets in the late spring, weekly, to review the success of the year's plans and to develop plans for the next year. This year's improvements in the curriculum in introducing Core Knowledge, for example, are the result of the work of this committee.

The principal has a clear vision for all her students and knows how she and her staff should go about achieving it. She takes time every day to emphasize to the whole school community that they are part of the "gifted village" and together they will achieve a great deal. She is committed to delivering highest quality academic and moral education for her students. The staff, through their commitment and hard work, for instance, in greatly improving the schools use and analysis of data, are supporting the principal in her vision.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Clara Cardwell School	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			X		
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?			X		
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?			X		
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?					X
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped