



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Ellen Lurie

Elementary School 005

**3703 Tenth Avenue
New York
NY 10034**

Principal: Wanda Soto

Dates of review: November 28 – 29, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Jo Cheadle

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Ellen Lurie is an elementary school with 855 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Black, 93.3% Hispanic and 0.4% White students. The student body includes 51.3% English language learners and 21.8% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 87%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 87% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The very strong leadership of the principal and very effective roles of senior staff make the management of the school extremely efficient and productive.
- The vision for the school is outstandingly clear, meticulously communicated to the whole school community and shared by all staff.
- Strategic planning for immediate, interim and long-term development is excellent and has an extremely valuable influence on student progress.
- Teaching is of high quality and teachers use student data carefully to plan for differentiated instruction.
- Goal setting for student and teacher outcomes is highly collaborative and effective in supporting student progress.
- Professional development opportunities match the needs of individuals very well while at the same time effectively supporting whole school goals.
- Expectations of students, teachers and parents are extremely high, encouraging exceptional levels of accountability and the desire to do well.
- The school values and respects its parents and keeps them extremely well informed of their children's progress and ways they can participate in the school's work.
- Attendance rates are high because parents are enormously supportive of all that the school does, and students are motivated, happy, love their teachers and want to come to school.
- The school is very self-evaluative, monitors its work rigorously and takes a courageous attitude to changing plans for improvement when necessary.

What the school needs to improve

- Build a more detailed picture of how well the school is doing by making increased use of comparisons with schools in similar contexts.
- Further enhance teachers' use of data to make differentiation of instruction even more effective.
- Find even more stimulating and innovative ways to improve the curriculum so that students are continually challenged academically and motivated by interesting work.

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.

There is no doubt that exceptional leadership drives the success of Ellen Lurie School. The principal epitomizes high levels of strategic organization, professional intelligence and an intrinsic belief in students, staff and parents. She encourages total commitment from the whole school community to strive for excellence. To this end, members of staff carry out their roles and responsibilities with a certainty of purpose and a passion to succeed. They regard and respect the principal and her assistants highly, recognizing that senior leaders value them as individuals and professionals. Members of the senior leadership team work in total harmony, upholding the outstandingly clear vision for the school's future and supporting progress towards very clear development goals. At the centre of everything that the school does is the total recognition that students must be successful. Parents are very appreciative of this and support the school very well. Students are also effusive about their school, stating that they have "the best teachers in New York City" who "treat us fairly and respect us".

The school is constantly seeking ways to improve and maintain the enthusiasm and support of its "clientele". Leaders rigorously and regularly evaluate established good systems and effective programs to devise strategies and goals that will turn them into excellent systems and highly effective programs. There is no air of complacency at this school. For this reason, the school is now seeking ways to build on teachers' already very efficient use of data to ensure that work, teaching methods and groupings consistently meet the needs of all students in all lessons. In addition, teachers fully recognize their accountability to motivate and stimulate students to achieve well. Many bring innovative ideas to the curriculum that encourage passion for life long learning. The school continues to improve this aspect of curriculum development. Leaders also recognize the benefits of measuring the success of programs and procedures in comparison with schools in similar contexts.

The school's inquiry team is working very well. The team has chosen a target group of grade 4 students working at the bottom end of level 2 or below, for whom proficiency ratings were also low. Aided efficiently by the data specialist, the team has collated excellent information for the group and is now making extremely good use of this information to "do something to impact on this group that will serve other students later on". This long-term, whole-school approach is evident in all aspects of the school's work. The good progress made in tackling the development areas from the last Quality Review is indicative of how leaders approach improvements. Teachers are increasingly more adept at analyzing the quality of students' writing and more consistently plan science and social studies to match student needs. Data analysis for English language learners is impacting significantly on learning and teaching. Clearly displayed on the principal's door are the words "Do you believe that all of NYC's students deserve a quality education? Prove it." Ellen Lurie School believes it and is doing a superb job of proving it.

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.

The school has an exceptional knowledge of individual students supported by a wealth of statistical and contextual information. Leaders have worked particularly hard to improve data pertaining to English language learners. The analysis and use of data for this group is now very good. It matches the quality of the detailed and extensive analysis the school carries out to understand patterns and trends in achievements for special education students, boys and girls and a wide range of other sub-groups. The school pays close attention to even the smallest group of students, recognizing that close monitoring of their achievements enables timely intervention that ensures consistently upward trends. Leaders and staff are fully aware of how small shifts in sub-group trends influence whole school performance outcomes. At present, leaders are following closely the progress of a small group of Arabic students, some of whom come from families where parents speak little English, to ensure that rates of progress are rapid enough for students to reach their potential. The school also has very thorough information about students who come from the most economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Leaders use data pertaining to this group carefully to plan intervention that bridges the gaps in experiences and opportunities that influence good learning. In this way, students from all backgrounds receive exactly the right support they need to ensure that they have equal chances to succeed. Over the past years, the school has regularly collated and made good use of student data. The opportunity to make extended use of computer technology to assist their current data analysis excites leaders greatly. The appointment of a knowledgeable data specialist is encouraging very methodical and useful systems of analyzing and using information. All working groups in school, such as the inquiry team, grade teams and leadership teams make very efficient use of this information. Moreover, very valuable information about student performance effectively supports individual teachers in their planning and classroom organization. Well-presented information from Acuity testing, for example, is enabling teachers to "teach to gaps" and plan challenging work for higher achieving students. Teachers are increasingly focused on matching work to the needs of students. The school's development plans relevantly highlight the need for even greater consistency in this aspect. There are plans to provide further training to ensure that all teachers are confident in the use of data. The school has a history of comparing its performance with other establishments. As part of the Reading First program, there have been regular opportunities to compare outcomes and use this information to guide improvements. There has so far been limited time to make detailed and useful comparisons with the new group of peer horizon schools. Leaders recognize the real benefits of learning from the successes and challenges of other schools. The school is ready to tackle this area for development.

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 outstanding.

Collaboration is fundamental to the school's success and the foundation for all setting and monitoring of goals. Excellent preparation for the current Quality Review, led by the

principal, emphasized the importance of past collaboration and the successes that have resulted from the school's distributive leadership style. This "empowered delegation" contributes significantly to the specific and very individualized goal setting for students. Staff feel that their professional judgments are valued greatly and this is continually acknowledged by the principal. With the extended use of technology, the relevance of data has taken on a new momentum and teachers have a very clear understanding of students who need to improve and those who need specific input to maintain and extend the already high levels achieved. Teachers set challenging goals to ensure that progress is as good as it can be for all achievement levels. They are making good use of ARIS to highlight limited proficiency scores, and creating very specific, timed and easily measurable goals for individual students. Well thought out intervention strategies support the goals that teachers set for those students in most need of improvement. Conferencing notes provide excellent evidence of this specific goal setting, particularly in reading and writing. Acuity tests have also highlighted the need for developments in listening skills for some students, and teachers regularly communicate goals to students and parents.

Parents are confident in their knowledge of what their children are currently achieving and what they must do to improve. They are extremely grateful for the timely information they regularly receive which means, "It's not too late to make a difference". In turn, they know that the school not only desires their contribution, but also expects it of them. This attitude is intrinsic to the school's atmosphere, where expectations of students, staff and parents are very high. The school expects parents to do their best to support their children, but provides them with all necessary tools to be effective in their role. The principal likewise expects the best from her staff, saying that she will "back each and every one of them.....but they must back me up with their professionalism".

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 outstanding.

The school makes effective use of a range of programs to build a core curriculum that is exceedingly appropriate to students' previous learning and experiences. Using all relevant information about a student's past performance, teachers select, adapt and monitor the impact of curriculum provision. In this way, they motivate and engage each student fully in their learning so that progress toward set goals is steady and continuous. The extent of flexibility in this process is exceptional, indicating clearly that the major force for curriculum decisions is always the students themselves. An example includes the designation of period seven each day as an intervention period for all students. This ensures that each student has allocated time to work on their individual goals with specialist support or programs, but denies no student access to other aspects of the curriculum by having to leave class at random points during the day. This and other good examples of curriculum innovations ensure continual improvement. Leaders are anxious to extend learning opportunities further by increasing the use of technology for video conferencing and worldwide links. In response to the last Quality Review, the school's improved focus on English language learners has resulted in organizational and funding adaptations to meet students' needs fully. Through mid-semester analysis of progress, leaders accepted that initial intervention ideas were having limited impact. They reorganized classes across three grades, reassigned some teachers to new teaching groups, reallocated support and intervention staff and informed parents of the absolute necessity to do so. This exemplifies the school's determination to provide exactly what students need to ensure good progress. Quite contrary to objecting to change, teachers pride themselves in their ability to be

flexible. This is because they hold themselves not only accountable to their students, but also to each other, recognizing their shared responsibility in ensuring good student progress. For this reason, faculty continues to focus on establishing excellence in differentiation to meet specific individual needs. Students believe that their school wants them to do well and that they learn “good things” that help them to move on to “good schools”. They are happy, want to work hard and enjoy coming to school. Leaders hold parents accountable for student attendance, yet support them wholly in dealing with out of school issues that may affect attendance and learning.

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 outstanding.

There are excellent opportunities for professional development linked directly to individual needs and at the same time supporting whole school improvement goals. In keeping with her excellent organizational skills and development of very useful procedures that ensure that the school runs exceptionally smoothly, the principal has created a meaningful “goal development form”. Through regular learning-walks, leaders use this form to highlight teachers' areas of strength and improvement points. From this information, they devise ongoing staff development plans, matched to the needs of individuals, to address each of the whole school goals. For instance, a clear year-long strategy for developing teachers' skills and knowledge supports the goal to improve differentiated instruction. Teachers are highly complimentary of the recognition of their varied skills and the match of professional development input to meet individual needs. In addition, the induction of new staff is exemplary. Mentors for new teachers receive regular training in their role, and coaches and assistant principals work together to revise support as necessary. Leaders facilitate opportunities for new teachers to participate in excellent in-house training with invited professionals, on topics such as the use of formative assessment tools. The school also provides new teachers with opportunities to attend seminars that develop their knowledge and practice. The most recent was an invitation to attend the seminar “Reflecting on Professional Teaching Standards”. New teachers say that they “want to be here forever”.

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 outstanding.

The school's plans for development and improvement underpin its increasing success. The principal translates the detailed Comprehensive Education Plan into a working document that guides the school on a daily basis. This document is accessible to all, used practically and annotated regularly to indicate progress or necessary adaptation. Through the outstandingly clear vision of school leaders, Ellen Lurie is a school that is in no doubt about where it is going. Leaders are courageous in taking a new route when monitoring shows that the journey is taking too long or is not effective. They make very good use of all available data from periodic and other assessment tools to provide evidence that informs the continuation or adaptation of strategic plans. The whole school community, including parents, participates fully in this process and the sense of togetherness is overwhelmingly evident.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Ellen Lurie	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 demanding, 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?					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?					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 make 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