



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Jackson Heights

Elementary School 069

**77- 02 37 Avenue
Queens
NY 11372**

Principal: Martha Vazquez

Dates of review: May 29 - 30, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Luz Cortazzo

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Jackson Heights is an elementary school with 1242 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1.4% Black, 42.2% Hispanic, 14 % White, 41.8% Asian. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for 2006-7 was 96%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 62% eligibility.

The school is a Magnet School for Cultural and Performing Arts and has adopted the School-Wide Enrichment Model, currently in its third year of implementation.

What the school does well

- The principal leads the school with a clear sense of purpose and a determination to further improve student outcomes.
- The school culture, characterized by mutual respect, high expectations, sharing and caring, encourages students to do their best.
- The school collects and regularly reviews a wide-range of data to monitor their performance and progress of students.
- There is a strong sense of community within the school, which is reflected in the excellent relationships amongst students, teachers, and parents.
- The highly nurturing and safe environment is evident by the consistent high rate of student attendance.
- Teachers work together in a highly collaborative and supportive manner.
- The administrative team provides effective instructional leadership and very strong support for both new and experienced teachers.
- The curriculum is well aligned to meet the needs of all its students.
- The school-wide enrichment model provides a stimulating range of learning opportunities.
- Professional development opportunities match the needs of teachers well while at the same time effectively supporting whole school goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Further enhance teachers' use of data to make differentiation of instruction even more effective.
- Use periodic assessments more precisely to modify instructional practices at interim stages during the academic year.
- Target the performance of English language learners by developing teachers' use of data to monitor students' progress over time.

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 is a well-developed school.

The principal ensures that Jackson Heights provides a safe and secure learning environment where stimulating instruction challenges students and supports academic achievement. This reflects the school's motto "Learning today for the challenges of tomorrow". Students love attending this school as evidenced by the consistently high attendance rate. The school has an extremely positive atmosphere and runs very smoothly. Parents comment favorably on the well-structured daily procedures that contribute to the positive school climate. Students' attitudes to learning are very good. The curriculum is broad and further enhanced by the enrichment model that offers all students opportunities to explore interests and expand their knowledge. There is a motivating and a positive school environment. The school's magnet theme is evident throughout and complimented by the many cultural residencies of the school.

The active parents' association works well with the school to encourage and increase parental involvement. In particular, the parents articulate their support of the school-wide enrichment model and the schools' understanding and appreciation of diversity. Staff know the students well, their knowledge of statistical data gives objective information about students' learning, thus providing a full picture of each student. The use of formal and informal assessment data is central to tracking progress for each student and planning for improvement. Goals are clear and strategies identified to bring about the successful achievement of students' goals drive the continuous professional development program. Good attention to interim evaluation of its goals, have led to specific changes to help student learning through the school's academic intervention services.

The school has made good progress in addressing the areas identified for improvement in the previous Quality Review. Teachers and school leaders use assessment information well. They collect and analyze a good range of data. Some teachers use the data extremely well to plan their lessons and differentiate instruction. This very good practice is, however, not consistent in the self-contained English language learners classes. Administration is aware that the progress of English language learners is not as high as their peers, and through the inquiry team have identified a target group of fourth grade English language learners and are looking at best ways in which to take this study forward so that its findings can eventually benefit the whole school.

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 is systematic in gathering detailed data on the performance and progress of its students. Teachers carry out formal and informal assessments in English language arts and math; conference notes and observations are recorded to add to such assessment

data. Information held by the school leaders and at classroom level is very well organized and easily accessible. Regular discussions between classroom teachers, academic intervention teachers and guidance personnel, ensure that there is consistency in the degree to which teachers plan and adapt work for their students.

Professional development opportunities provide teachers with the forum to analyze formative and summative assessments including samples of student work, to effectively track progress and meet the needs of each child. Data is updated frequently which, together with the practice of conferencing and low inference observation, allows the school to respond rapidly to identify student needs. Teachers plan and implement interventions immediately when data indicates students are not progressing adequately. School leaders compare the progress made by different cohorts of students. Subsequently, teachers adapt lesson plans. However, the monitoring of the performance of English language learners is not as robust and this adversely affects their progress. The school has begun to examine the performance of students by gender and taken specific steps to broaden their school-wide choice models to include the different interests of males and females. The school recognizes the need for teachers to track students' progress more efficiently and with the help of the parents' association has purchased laptops for each classroom teacher in order for them to track student progress using the Acuity assessment tool. Through ARIS, the school is able to compare performance with peer schools. This results in transferring best practices from peer schools to that of their own. Inter-visitations are conducted followed by debriefing with peer school staff.

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.

Targets in the Comprehensive Education Plan are clear and have a good level of challenge. All stakeholders are held accountable for the literacy development of each student. Structures are in place to involve all staff in supporting literacy development across all subjects; these include grade level meetings, as well as professional periods to plan and share ideas in order to support the instructional goals. The two assistant principals are responsible for the supervision of the upper and lower grades. They conduct daily walkthroughs, formal and informal observations, attend grade level planning, and they meet daily with the principal to discuss plans to support the staff in order to meet school and student goals. All grade level planning is based on data results from running records, 'Foundations' unit tests, writing continuum, ECLAS-2, and interim assessments.

School goals and plans have a strong focus on student performance. All stakeholders review data and share analysis for instructional implications. However, the review of interim assessment data for English language learners is inconsistent to enable realistic goals to be set in order to accelerate their learning. To improve matters the schools' inquiry team chose this group of students as their focus group and their findings will be shared with the whole school.

Teachers and administrators have high expectations for students and convey their expectations to parents and students alike. Parents articulate their satisfaction with the school and how well supported they feel due to the excellent communication system which aids their understanding of the school's development and their own children's progress and performance.

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 schools' curriculum provides an effective vehicle for students to have high levels of challenge, explore new ideas and work together to improve their knowledge and skills. The school follows the mandated curriculum, with balanced literacy and Everyday Mathematics as the foundation for building the students' basic skills. The school-wide Enrichment model, currently in its third year of implementation offers the students opportunities to explore their interests and expand their knowledge base thus motivating and contributing to a positive school environment. The school is also a magnet school for cultural and performing arts contributing to its diversity and extending student interest. This year's theme of Asia is reflected in the many residencies implemented based on the magnet theme.

The school makes good budgetary, staffing and scheduling decisions which clearly impact on student achievement. Focusing on the importance of data, this year due to a funding balance under the QZAB program the school was able to buy laptops for teachers to assist with data analysis. Conferences and small group instruction addresses the individual needs of students at their level including higher order thinking skills and deepening the skills of advanced students and remediation for those at risk.

Teachers are actively involved in establishing the content of the curriculum, which is discussed at grade level meetings. In this, data provides evidence for change to ensure that the curriculum is broad and engaging and matches the students' needs and interests. Teachers' assessments ensure that plenty of data is available for interim and long-term evaluation of student progress. Teachers recognize they are accountable for raising students' achievement. They plan together, and for the most part endeavor to differentiate work for students.

The nurturing and safe environment along with the excellent procedures for encouraging and monitoring student attendance are leading to significant attendance levels year on year. Attendance is currently running at 96%.

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.

Processes are in place to ensure regular opportunities for close collaboration and planning within grade and subject teams and with the academic intervention teachers and pupil personnel services. Administrators use observation outcomes to drive professional development decisions, identify and share good practices and monitor closely the impact on student progress. Professional development is differentiated for new and experienced teachers, as well as depending on need or interest and increases confidence and competence in all staff to meet their own, and their students' improvement goals. Teachers also recognize that the professional development program provides opportunities to further their skills, in order to raise student achievement. The principal has created a culture of sharing professional learning between staff. Newly recruited teachers have a 'buddy' teacher as a mentor, which provides support. All staff give

feedback to their colleagues about professional development and training they attend. This sharing of professional development deepens the impact of the training provided.

Systems and procedures for the smooth running of the school are clear, followed by all staff and students and are well established into normal routines. The parents, students, and teachers all commented on the excellent communication systems that are in place, and how all communication is sent home in the many languages representative of the school community to facilitate communication and show respect for the cultural and language diversity. There is a demonstrable impact on student learning. Behavior management strategies are clear, effective and consistently applied throughout the school.

Excellent relationships, with Teachers College Reading and Writing Project and Wilson Language training, significantly enhance the education provided by the school. There is a high focus on improving academic achievement. City Lore, Marquis Studios, Flushing Council of Culture are just a few of the residencies that complement the magnet theme. These, along with many other projects are brought together in an effort to build community, cultural awareness and appreciation for diversity.

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.

The principal and the administration have developed a clear understanding of the performance of students across the school by ensuring data is collected and used effectively. With the guidance of the inquiry team, literacy and mathematics coaches, academic intervention teachers, and data specialist, teachers use data effectively to set meaningful and achievable goals for the students and monitor progress towards these goals effectively. As the school year progresses, goals are evaluated by teachers and administration, and plans are modified to meet students' needs as necessary. Teachers work hard, through regular individual conferences with students, to make sure that each student knows how well they have done and what they have to do next in order to improve. Clearly defined interim goals with measurable objectives regarding student and teacher outcomes facilitate progress towards school-wide goals. The substantial data held by teachers aligned with systematic conference notes provide realistic goals for struggling students. This information discussed at pupil personnel meetings, helps ensure that individual goals are adjusted so that each student remains firmly on track. Periodic assessments are mostly used well by teachers, and these together with other diagnostic tools, provide teachers with a wide range of useful information. But some revision of planning in order re-teach areas of the curriculum not well understood by students is not quite so efficient. The school access to technology including student accessibility of the Acuity assessment at home has had a positive impact on teachers and student ability to expand and strengthen the home-school connection.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Jackson Heights 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