

Quality Review Report

2008-2009

Public School 051

Early Childhood School 051

**87- 45 117 Street
Queens
NY 11418**

Principal: Magdaly Saint-Juste

Dates of review: October 21 - 22, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Barbara Kwiecinski

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 051 is an early childhood school with 228 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 1. The school population comprises 7% Black, 27% Hispanic, 15% White, and 50% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 93.0%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

All staff and parents work tirelessly to put the school's mission statement into practice. They strive to create the best opportunity for all students to learn in a creative and nurturing environment. This results in a happy school where the parents say, "The focus is on learning, from the moment students enter the school." The Comprehensive Educational Plan sets the direction for the school year. Staff describe it as a working document, which they revise on an on-going basis. All strategic planning emanates from the overall plan and all staff have clearly defined responsibilities.

Goal setting, based on the extensive use of data, is in place for all students and all student sub-groups. Students willingly share their goals and speak with pride about their portfolios of work that contain their best pieces. Students take these home on a regular basis and share their successes with their parents. Displays of student work are vibrant and are assessed against clear rubrics. Even though the students are young, they are beginning to assess their own and their peers' work. This is developing and the school wishes to extend this further in order to help students reflect and identify next steps in their learning.

Parents are an integral part of school life, and the work of the parent coordinator is exceptional. All activities are well attended because they are evaluated and adapted to fit parents' needs. All correspondence is of high quality and parents feel that the key to the school's success is its emphasis on learning within a respectful context. Students are polite to each other and to staff and talk with enthusiasm about the variety of activities they undertake. The school welcomes parental volunteers, and the induction process they undergo before assignment to a class is rigorous. Their support for teachers and students is very focused and their role is clearly aligned to their strengths.

The school is a learning community and all staff have individual as well as whole-school goals. As a result of observation and feedback, these are refined within prescribed timeframes. Teaching is very good and exceptional for pre-kindergarten students. Differentiation is in place in all classrooms and the school is looking at ways to extend this. As the school is small, flexibility is limited, but structures are beginning to be put in place to give colleagues greater opportunities to share good practice.

What the school does well

- The extensive use of data in all core subjects results in all staff identifying student strengths and areas needing support, and leads to good quality instruction.
- The work of the parent coordinator is exemplary and ensures parents have many varied opportunities and are supported to help students achieve their personal and academic goals.
- Teachers welcome the focused feedback following classroom observations and, as a result, their professional development plans are revised and new goals are set.
- Staff readily take on additional responsibilities and are valued members of the school's decision-making process.
- The Comprehensive Educational plan is a working document and interim data is used effectively to evaluate progress towards goals, in order to develop new strategic plans.
- Students love coming to school and are very well supported in a nurturing, collaborative community, which results in good personal and academic progress.
- The principal always puts the school's vision into practice, this results in great respect from staff, students and parents who collectively strive for continued improvement.

What the school needs to improve

- Further extend the opportunities for students to reflect on their own and peers' work, enabling them to explain their next steps in learning.
- Continue the focus on differentiation, particularly in terms of varying the activities provided as opposed to expecting different outcomes from one activity.
- Continue to provide opportunities for teachers to carry out visits to classes in this and other schools in order to further share the very good practice that exists within the school.

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

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

The school has clearly defined processes in place in order to gather, analyze and interpret formative, summative and diagnostic data for all students' performance and progress. Extensive data analysis occurs in all core subjects, and the collegial nature of the staff and their desire to be "a learning school" means that comparisons of progress between grades, sub-groups and curriculum areas are the norm. The inquiry team is an extension of the assessment process. For instance, the team recognized the importance of "rhyming" to the language development of students with English as a second language. A game to support this belief is in place. This has resulted in students' vocabulary and comprehension improving rapidly.

The support parents receive from the school, and in particular from the parents' coordinator, is exemplary. There is an extensive range of activities for parents in all curriculum areas. Faculty see their involvement as integral to the school's success. Many parents volunteer to help in lessons and there is a clearly designed and effective training program prior to their assignment to a class. In addition, there is daily dialogue between parents and teachers on student's progress.

The school places great emphasis on the use of data to track all students' progress and is part of the Department of Education's pilot program for kindergarten to second-grade assessments. Students are encouraged to celebrate and share their work. They understand how teachers assess their work. Their involvement in this process is developing and more and more opportunities are available to extend student reflection.

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.

The school leadership team, the advisory committee, and the inquiry team are very effective and provide complementary structures to support the school's practice of goal setting for all students. Students in all grades understand what their targets are. They willingly share their work and are proud of the excellent displays in the hallways where their success is celebrated. The well-organized, monthly faculty meeting provides the opportunity for all staff to discuss student goals and targets. The meetings have a clear structure and data informs the debate. Each class teacher has two weekly common planning periods. In these, there is true collaboration and teachers collectively develop useful rubrics, based on the units of instruction in the content areas.

Parents speak very positively about home-school communications. They believe that the tone is clearly set at the beginning of each academic year. Parents attend a “meet the teachers” night. This meeting initiates the goal-setting conversation and from this point is on going on a daily basis. Parents understand whole-school goals and individual student goals and appreciate the fact that correspondence is always in the appropriate home language.

The goals in the Comprehensive Educational Plan inform all aspects of school life and, on a monthly basis, the school leadership team reflects on progress towards these. In May, work commences on curriculum mapping for the forthcoming academic year. This process is collaborative and informs the Comprehensive Educational Plan. This clearly specifies when benchmark assessments occur throughout the year. Tentative assessment dates are included. Consequently, all teachers have a clear picture of the school’s assessment system. This results in very effective long-term and short-term planning, for both administration and teachers.

The vast numbers of parent workshops are of very high quality. The parent coordinator carries out a risk assessment prior to any activity. Presentations always include interactivity and parental views are formally evaluated. This is just one of many ways in which parents are helped to understand the high expectations all faculty have for students.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

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

The school always aims to help all students to meet or exceed New York State standards. All decisions related to the curriculum occur within the context of high standards and academic rigor. Each classroom teacher uses the Core Knowledge Curriculum to develop monthly interdisciplinary plans. Science, social studies and the arts are integrated into the wider curriculum. The links are clearly seen and the use of the biography of “Johnny Appleseed” to inform students’ writing, their math graphs of different types of apple and discussion of diet in science is just one example of the many links across different curriculum areas.

Assessment systems are in place for each student. Teachers make very effective conference notes and use higher-level questioning skills to extend the thinking of the more-able students. They use their extensive notes and a wide range of formative and summative data to group students accordingly. Differentiation is in place in all lessons, but the school aims to extend this further to include a wider range of opening activities. Too often, differentiation is by outcome, a point well understood by the principal.

Students and parents love the school. They see it in a very positive light, as a school where respect and trust are always high on everyone’s agenda. Even though the students are very young, they take on responsibilities. In a very well organized pre-kindergarten classroom, their responsibilities are clearly displayed.

Students love to share their work. A first grade student ably explained the names of different mathematical shapes, understood the meaning of the word template and shared his technique to use the shapes to make a man to his friends. The sharing of

work with peers is at an early stage of development and this strategy is helping students to explain their next learning steps.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

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

All teachers have detailed professional development plans. These are refined on an ongoing basis. Teachers welcome the support they receive from the principal and find her feedback of great value. They use her suggestions to reflect on their practice and collaboratively decide on next steps. As the school is small and there is no assistant principal, an advisory committee is in place. This team consists of staff members other than teachers, who carry out observation walkthroughs with the principal. She believes that all stakeholders should be involved in understanding what good teaching and learning looks like. This methodology provides observation through different professional lenses. In addition to the support teachers receive from the principal, a specialist visits the school on a weekly basis to observe teachers, model lessons and give extra support. All teachers are trained in Foundations, Double-Dose and the Probe. This provides a common set of tools to further support discussion on professional development. There is much good practice in the school and the excellent quality of pre-kindergarten work is recognized at City level. The school is keen to extend the opportunities for staff to carry out intervisitations, both within and outside the school, as they see this as key to sharing best practice.

The work of the inquiry team has great impact on the progress of students with English as a second language and the team's effective methodology is shared across the whole faculty. Staff willingly take on additional responsibilities. They talk of the excellent collaboration and feel valued for their efforts.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 school has a clearly articulated process to evaluate all its action plans. It takes account of all forms of data in order to refine the planning and goal-setting processes. This commences at the beginning of each year where, in addition to formative and summative teacher data, the outcomes of the learning environment survey and the Quality Review inform the planning of professional development. In addition to whole-school goals, teachers' individual goals are set within clear interim timeframes. This results in all plans being systematically reviewed and revised goals set.

Benchmark goals are in place across the curriculum and clearly defined rubrics result in accurate assessments of student work. As a result, teachers can quickly assess whether students are meeting expectations. When this is not the case and progress is not as expected, this leads to a faster referral route and teachers collectively deciding on other strategies to try.

The principal is very clear in her educational philosophy and works tirelessly to motivate all staff and students. Parents speak proudly of her determination and drive. She sets herself very high standards and consequently this is reflected throughout the school. The school culture is reflective and all faculty continually endeavor to do better for all students.

School name: Public School 051	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?				X
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?				X
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?				X
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?				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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?				X
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?				X
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?				X
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DY0, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?				X
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?			X	
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?				X
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.

<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?				X
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X	
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?				X
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X

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

<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?				X
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?				X
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?				X
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X

Quality Review Scoring Key

△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed
---	-----------------------	---	--	---	-------------------	---	-----------------------