

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Public School 224

Elementary - Middle School 224

**252-12 72 Avenue
Queens
NY 11426**

Principal: Desmond Park

Dates of review: April 24, 28 - 29, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Helen Donnellan

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 224 is an elementary/middle school with 430 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 32% Black, 2% American Indian, 26% Hispanic, 20% White and 16% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 74% of the students enrolled and girls account for 26%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 92%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

This district 75 school shares sites with seven general education schools in Queens and also has one self-contained building where students may be taught in inclusive settings or self-contained classes. Students' disabilities include emotional problems, developmental delays, hearing impairment and autism.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Administrators and staff have successfully created a highly effective school that is student-centered at the same time as being data-driven. The principal has successfully established a single culture common to all the eight sites that make up the school. All staff have high expectations of students, academically and socially. The education and help students receive enables them to achieve these high expectations within a extremely supportive and respectful culture. The administration has refined the school's extensive systems for analyzing and using data to give a good record of the progress of individual students, groups and classes. Currently, as all data is not drawn together to provide a comprehensive overview of progress in core subjects, it makes it more difficult to compare progress across the full curricula range. However, the links between data, student goals and instruction are clear. Consequently instruction closely matches individual needs and students make secure progress towards their academic and personal goals, which are set out in individual education plans. Teachers in all core subjects use data to set targets and monitor progress against these frequently. They share goals with students and their parents in ways all can understand but there is no formal system to account for the student voice in decision-making. Successful working relationships with parents and related service providers are key to student success and the school achieves very strong partnerships across all sites. Teachers use the solid assessment data consistently to plan instruction to match the needs of students in all subjects and programs. All staff show high levels of commitment to their professional learning. They reflect and continually use data to review their instruction and student outcomes and identify how they themselves can improve. Teachers have an individual development plan, but currently these do not include any evaluation of the impact of professional development on their practice. Their discussions and scrutiny of their effectiveness does illustrate how staff hold themselves to account, as well as showing accountability through the school's formal processes.

This is a school that knows itself well and this is reflected in the quality of the self-evaluation for this Quality Review. School leaders and faculty routinely monitor progress towards long-and short-term plans and show flexibility by making changes where these are shown to be necessary.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school routinely gathers extensive data in all service categories to give a balanced and accurate view of students' strengths and areas for improvement in all core subjects, behavior and therapy programs.
- The administration ensures that teachers consistently use the well-designed systems to set measurable and challenging student goals in all core subjects.
- Teachers and administrators work hard to build and sustain supportive partnerships with parents and actively engage them in their children's learning.
- Teachers use creative methods to involve students in assessing their progress and setting their next learning goals.
- The well-planned curriculum meets requirements, provides varied challenges for students to acquire and apply knowledge and skills and allow them to achieve goals within their individual education plan.
- The administration has successfully established staff reflection on their instruction and learning outcomes as an integral part of professional development.
- The rigorous use of data underpins the culture of planning, monitoring and reviewing and determines well-founded changes.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine existing templates for presenting data by supplying sufficient information to give a comprehensive overview of achievement and a more easily accessed picture of student progress across the core subjects.
- Establish ways of using the student voice to influence school life and help students develop active citizenship.
- Extend the existing structure for teacher development plans to include an evaluation of the impact of any professional development on their instruction.

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.

This is a school where gathering data is a fundamental part of school life, beginning with the use of baseline assessments when students join the school. Data is then built up by a wide range of formal and informal assessments and gives a full view of each student's progress and performance. Teachers and related service providers work closely to gather in-depth and precise information about the small steps made by each student. This provides a detailed picture of student strengths in therapy goals, behavior and all the core subjects taught. Teachers of students using standardized or alternate assessments employ data equally well so the school is well informed about the progress and performance of all students. School leaders have taken the initiative to design elegant analytical tools which clearly show progress made by individual students, groups and classes and give school leaders valuable information about patterns and trends in learning outcomes over more than one year in attendance, behavior and some, but not all core subjects. Currently, records do not include sufficient information to give a comprehensive overview of comparative progress in all core subjects and whilst all data is available it is held in several places which makes it harder to compare progress across the full range of subjects.

Students actively assess their progress using a variety of strategies and tools appropriate to their understanding. Younger and lower-achieving students use symbols, images and simple words to evaluate their work, while readers show greater independence by comparing work to rubrics that clearly set out teachers' expectations. As a result they are well informed about what they have to master.

Teachers use data routinely to identify precise and measurable goals within each student's educational plan. These goals are communicated to parents and, where appropriate, with students so there is a shared understanding of what the student needs to work on and how progress will be measured through the year. In higher grades, teachers and students monitor progress in relation to goals on individual education plans which break down each student's annual goals into small and achievable short-term targets.

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.

School leaders continually refine how teachers use data to set measurable, challenging, yet realistic goals for the diverse range of students across the service categories. This has resulted in a sophisticated structure for gathering and using data to set goals and

from which to plan instruction. Each student has goals in all core subjects, as well as the target areas of the annual goals. The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS) is used exceptionally well to set individual short-term targets explicitly linked to the student's goals. Teachers then use well-structured running records and observations to routinely track student progress towards mastery of each goal. They update assessment records at least twice each month and use their findings to ensure that instruction matches the individual learning needs of every student in their classes. Parents and students are fully involved in goal-setting and monitoring progress, using methods they can easily understand. Teachers are creative in how they use symbols, pictures and simple sentences to reinforce goals for non-verbal students and those with emerging, or limited language.

The goals for all students reflect the school's high expectations for every student in: academic subjects, improving behavior and life skills. All staff continually reinforces the school aim to increase student independence through strategies which enable them to become resourceful and resilient learners. Teachers show no complacency in challenging students and one parent summed this up as, "Teachers set the bar high and keep raising it".

Data is used just as extensively in school-wide planning and setting goals. This is clearly evident in the way that goals and interim milestones in the Comprehensive Educational Plan align to specific assessments for monitoring progress of students in different service categories. The school leadership team and cabinet use data with which to identify priorities and track progress against, in a systematic and rigorous way. The views of parents and faculty are taken fully into account in school-wide planning and decision-making. However, the school does not yet have formal systems to take into account the student voice in decision-making.

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 curriculum is well planned to provide breadth in all core subjects and the support students need enable them to make good and, in many cases accelerated progress towards their long-term goals. Teachers show ingenuity and creativity in adapting the required subject content to reflect the developmental and language levels of each student. They also incorporate students' interests and learning styles, which result in stimulating multi-sensory learning experiences. Speaking and listening skills are seen as a key element of learning in all subjects, especially with the youngest students and those with little or no spoken language. Teachers fully exploit opportunities to extend vocabulary, such as, by subtly weaving work on letter sounds and names of food ingredients into a cookery class for pre-kindergarten students.

Related service providers are equally conscientious in planning their programs to reflect students' goals and build on their previous skills. They plan intervention by working closely with teachers and link activities with the content of core curriculum subjects in meaningful and dynamic ways. School leaders make clear their expectation for instruction and are diligent in monitoring planning and teaching to ensure that these are met and students achieve well. They organize staff and equipment flexibly to meet student needs and place great importance on the use of technology for teaching and learning. The principal makes shrewd and well-founded judgments in allocating the

school budget so that resources meet the changing needs of the student population. He is a powerful advocate for students to have access to shared facilities at all host schools, reflecting his commitment to all with special needs.

The school is highly successful in giving students a clear framework for improving their behavior through the *Power of Choice* program. Their goals in this are explicit, monitored and shared with parents daily. This has led to: a significant reduction in disruptive incidents, students taking responsibility for their actions and high levels of respect for adults and other students. At a meeting with middle school students during this Quality Review, students described the value and benefits of positive influences and examples provided by adults and how these support them in becoming resilient learners. One student described how support from teachers helps them in showing their "Determination when you don't succeed".

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.

Professional development is a key part of the school culture, recognized and valued by teachers and parents. The school uses the professional teaching standards as the basis for evaluating teacher performance which ensures consistent expectations of instruction at all sites. The school has an established system for setting professional development goals for each teacher. These reflect whole-school initiatives, the outcomes of classroom observations and the needs of students. As a result, professional development is closely tailored to individual teachers. However, the reviews of teachers' professional development plans do not yet include reflection on the impact of such development on their classroom practice and learning outcomes. The support for new teachers is shaped well to meet their needs and includes ongoing support from mentors. In this way, new teachers quickly learn school procedures and expectations.

The professional culture is enriched by reflective inquiry and action research by the inquiry team and other collaborative teams. They use the extensive network of team meetings to share their findings and concerns without delay that spreads effective practice and provides numerous opportunities for a team-based approach to problem solving. One of the school's two inquiry teams has refined a commercial provider's analyses of (ABLLS) data sheets to provide more in-depth information about student progress. Teachers and related service providers have worked as a unified team on this innovative activity which is now being shared across the school and adds significantly to the richness of the school's data on student progress.

Collaborative work and successful partnerships with external organizations and service providers are key features of school life at all sites. These are explicitly set out in a detailed plan covering services for pre-kindergarten students to young people moving on to high school. The well-defined structure of the plan shows the links between the curriculum, professional development, district 75 and department initiatives, work with families and student data. This provides easily understood information that gives a clear picture of a school working closely with numerous partners to support its students in their academic and personal development.

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.

School leaders have refined and extended previous systems to provide a coordinated and cohesive system for planning, monitoring and reviewing all aspects of the school's work. From administration to classroom teachers, the in-depth collection and analyses of relevant data are used consistently to monitor learning and make astute judgments about the content of instruction. The Comprehensive Educational Plan contains measurable goals with defined interim milestones, which school leaders monitor rigorously through the year. Where monitoring highlights a well-founded need for modifications to teaching, resources or staffing, suitable changes are made promptly so that learning is not impeded. One example of this is the extension of the *Power of Choice* program to all sites, resulting in a significant decrease in disruptive incidents.

Teachers and related service providers make adjustments to levels of support and programs for individual students in the same way. This includes moving students to less restrictive educational settings as a result of academic progress or improved behavior.

The principal makes clear his drive for continual improvement by frank and probing questions that challenge staff, promote reflection on their practice and make them take responsibility for their instruction and student learning. His drive for high quality education for every student is at the forefront of all the school's work and is reflected in an absence of complacency. The high level of awareness and honesty about what the school does well and how to build on its already strong practice is reflected in the school's self-evaluation for this Quality Review. The document is evaluative and makes clear the actions the school takes and more importantly, the impact of those actions.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Public School 224	△	➤	✓	+
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.

To what extent do ...	△	➤	✓	+
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.

To what extent do school leaders...	△	➤	✓	+
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.

To what extent do ...	△	➤	✓	+
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