



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Katherine R Snyder School  
Public School 222**

**3301 Quentin Road  
Brooklyn  
NY 11234**

**Principal: Louise Blake**

**Dates of review: October 3 - 4, 2006**

**Reviewer: Kath Wood**

# Content of the report

## **Part 1: The School Context**

Background information about the school

## **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

## **Part 3: Main Findings**

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

Public School 222 is a well established elementary school providing education for 888 students from pre-kindergarten to 5th grade. The school is barrier-free, serving 46 physically challenged students in both general and special education classes and has served as a model for the Least Restrictive Environment initiative and the collaborative team teaching program. This program includes two classes for autistic kindergarten children. There are 12 Eagle (gifted), 16 regular education, 7 collaborative team teaching and 5 self-contained special education classes.

The school has a larger proportion of White students (55%) than similar schools and has a range of other ethnic backgrounds represented, including Black, Hispanic and Asian. 6% of the students are English language learners. The percentage of students eligible for Title 1 funding, at 41%, is below the City average of 72%. Attendance has steadily increased over recent years and is presently 95% which is above the City average of 93%.

Public School 222 is committed to the philosophy that all children can learn and strives to provide an environment in which students feel safe, valued and well cared for. The school sets high expectations for achievement and has been recognized for Educational Excellence.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal demonstrates excellent leadership, effectively supported by the strong assistant principals, and has secured a vision for the school that is shared by all.
- Relationships are excellent; adults and students alike feel safe, valued and cared for.
- Students have very positive attitudes towards their learning and are strongly motivated to respond to the high expectations of their teachers.
- Teachers know their students well and monitor academic progress closely to ensure success and social, emotional and physical needs are exceptionally well catered for.
- There are strong relationships with parents and the community.
- Students who experience difficulties in their learning are very well supported by the school and a wide range of other agencies ensuring their needs are monitored closely and they make good progress.
- High quality professional development is provided for teachers and paraprofessionals to respond to both whole school and individual needs; this has resulted in very effective teaching and learning.
- The principal has developed excellent support networks which have enabled the school to benefit from many additional resources to promote learning.
- Creative scheduling ensures that teachers have regular access to collaborative planning and preparation time in grade groups.
- The faculty are highly committed to barrier-free education and all students are fully included into the school community.

### What the school needs to improve

- Formalize the agreement on when, and in which grade, the different topics and themes in mathematics should be introduced to reduce pressure for test grade classes; presently, this system is not formalized to agree
- Increase the number and range of enrichment programs in order to further develop opportunities to stimulate and enhance student learning.
- Maintain the focus on the individual needs of special education students and English language learners to ensure increased achievement.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well developed school.**

Public School 222 provides a good quality of education for all its students. Clear systems and structures maintained by the very effective administration team ensure that the school is well organized, orderly, calm and purposeful. The principal has developed a staff handbook which outlines all the day to day functions and effectively highlights exactly what is expected from teachers and paraprofessionals. Policy and procedures are monitored closely by the administration team to make sure that students are receiving high quality instruction and support. Teachers are prepared to work hard to achieve success.

The school provides a welcoming, mutually respectful environment to which staff, students and parents feel proud to belong. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement and staff at all levels show real pleasure in celebrating students' achievements. Students with physical, emotional and learning difficulties are very well integrated into the school. Classes are carefully organized to ensure maximum inclusion and students work and play together very happily.

Resources are excellent and support the curriculum very effectively. The principal is skilled in budget management and works closely with parents and the wider community to win grants and donations. This has resulted in a well stocked and attractive library, extensive literacy resources and a state-of-the-art computer suite.

#### **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 student progress over time.**

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

The school collects and makes very good use of a wide range of information relating to individual student progress and performance. Data includes standardized test results, developmental reading tests and results of weekly quizzes alongside continuous assessment notes taken in the classroom. Classroom teachers develop a wealth of information about each student for progress in literacy and mathematics, building up a picture of individual strengths and weaknesses in order to respond to individual needs. Cluster teachers, deployed for instruction in social studies and science, use their record book system very effectively to monitor performance and are responsible for ensuring that this data is discussed with class teachers on a regular basis.

As each child is monitored closely, any fall in performance is addressed at an early stage by introducing appropriate interventions. The strong team of support personnel effectively target all students identified through classroom monitoring systems as being at risk. The assistant principals lead weekly meetings to check that the student tracking systems are fully maintained and the referral structure is functioning effectively. These allow the staff to

discuss individual student progress and needs and form an excellent system for keeping a sharp focus on individual students.

The principal maintains a very thorough whole school overview of performance which she constantly updates. Working closely with the assistant principals she uses a variety of recording systems to check individual progress, to compare performance across the grades and to identify specific strategies for teachers to use with individuals or groups. All information is shared with individual teachers either in writing or in individual meetings. Some areas for whole school development are identified through the "skill of the week" system in which different grades are allocated a specific focus, for example to highlight cause and effect in 1st grade, or to increase a more open style of questioning in 3rd grade mathematics. The administration monitor adherence to the program in their daily walk-throughs. These systems are rigorously applied and very systematic ensuring that the leadership gives very clear direction to the work of the school.

The performance of English language learners and special education students is tracked carefully within classes and across the school. Although they make good progress, the school has selected these groups for higher level analysis this year to ensure that they are supported to achieve even more. This goal was identified through analysis of past performance, comparing results within and between grades and in relation to comparisons with other schools. The principal keeps a close eye on the performance of other schools and works hard to maintain the high-achieving status of Public School 222.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.**

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

The principal and assistant principals use school data effectively to create well balanced classes at the start of each school year. A careful match is made between class groups and teachers and with individual students and paraprofessionals. This ensures that all students are very well supported in their learning. The Comprehensive Education Plan is used as a framework for school development and is translated into specific roles and responsibilities within the staff handbook so that all faculty are clear about what they need to do, how they need to work and when they need to complete tasks. This consistency of practice ensures that all student learning steps are well documented and effective.

Rubrics are in place for all elements of the curriculum and are shared with students and their parents so that goals and expectations for individuals are clear. Teachers are regularly given the opportunity to work collaboratively on agreeing standards and have recently revised the expectations for reading achievement. Different classes within each grade now have higher standards to meet, with Eagle classes in particular being specifically challenged. Teachers’ planning is carefully monitored by the principal. Suggestions for strategies are made on the plans in note form for both whole class and group instruction so that maximum impact is gained from each teaching period.

Good communication is evident between faculty and parents on both a formal and informal basis. Regular workshops are held to explain and demonstrate curriculum subject teaching strategies; formal meetings to discuss individual progress are very well attended, and teachers and administration have an open door policy which encourages parents to

keep in touch. Teachers have an agreement that any parental enquiry will receive a response within 24 hours, although in practice contact is almost immediate when concerns are raised; parents recognize and this are full of praise for the staff's attitude and actions.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

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

The school has the opportunity to implement a wide range of innovative programs and approaches to the curriculum thanks to its 'Educational Excellence' status. It makes very good use of this freedom. For instance, when analysis of data demonstrated the need for improvement in the reading skills of special education students, a new program "Spire" was introduced. This has been very successful in both aligning instruction and in motivating individual students. Other programs focus on comprehension, data handling, fluency and decoding. The administration are constantly seeking out new programs to interest and engage the students and ensure that other members of faculty are involved in review and selection of new materials. The excellent relationships between adults and students lead to very positive attitudes and real enjoyment in learning. Students are confident and comfortable with asking any adult for help or support, whether academic, physical or emotional. They trust their teachers and feel that they want the very best for each of them.

Resources at the school are excellent. The principal manages the budget very effectively and works closely with parents and the wider community to acquire additional funding and grants to support curriculum developments. Faculty members have responsibility for the maintenance and distribution of resources so that the quality and quantity are carefully monitored. The provision of enrichment activities is restricted by the budget. The school does provide a range of opportunities, but would like to offer more choice to the students. The principal has plans to extend and develop this area of the school's work through liaison with parent and community groups.

Student attendance has improved during recent years. Records are monitored closely to keep track of individuals and families so that support is rapidly provided when required. A motivational rather than punitive approach is used for attendance and tardiness. A wide range of reward strategies is employed to promote good attendance, with the data shared with all students on postboards, at morning announcements and in meetings.

There are clear systems and structures to ensure that movement around the school is well ordered and that no time is wasted. Teachers and paraprofessionals are assigned clear responsibilities and are held accountable for outcomes. They are prepared to work very hard to achieve success. Creative scheduling ensures that instruction time during the school day is maximized.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

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

The principal has very clear criteria for selecting faculty members. She recognizes the need for effective teamworking and makes careful choices based on her knowledge of particular strengths when assigning a teacher or paraprofessional to a grade or student. This has a positive impact on both the quality of instruction and relationships across the school.

Professional development is an area of high focus and faculty enjoy a wide range of opportunities to develop as both individuals and as a whole school. A wide variety of in-house and external training is made available, using the staff developers and outside trainers. Teachers have regular opportunities to observe each other in the classroom and good practice is celebrated and shared. Administrators monitor classroom practice at every opportunity, both formally and informally and use their evaluations to improve instruction by providing support and training. Feedback is always provided; sometimes written, sometimes verbal and sometimes in the form of post-it notes which are left on teachers' desks to acknowledge good practice or success. Teachers really appreciate the time taken by administrators to recognize their work and achievements. New faculty members are all assigned a mentor to assist in settling in to school routines and are well supported in data analysis and differentiated instruction. The principal monitors the impact of professional development carefully. The recent work on balanced literacy and shared reading has been evaluated in walk-throughs and in analysis of test scores in reading. This close monitoring results in high quality instruction and good student progress.

The principal ensures that all grade teams have weekly opportunities to work together on planning and assessment. Creative scheduling results in the 4th grade team receiving extended planning time to moderate judgments and examine student work even more thoroughly. This good practice has enabled the 4th grade teachers to work with other grade teams during their planning period to develop systems and strategies which utilize their time more effectively.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

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

The faculty at all levels keeps the school under constant review. Teachers assume responsibility for curriculum design and revision. They also assess and analyze student progress. The skilled academic intervention team utilizes these same evaluation measures to design support programs for individual students as appropriate. Regular debate between classroom teachers and the support staff ensures that individual student programs are meeting their specific needs and accurately identifies any modification required.

The overview of whole school performance is efficiently managed by the administrators and the principal in particular has an excellent understanding of what is happening in each classroom and in each grade. These processes ensure that all progress towards the school goals have agreed milestones and evaluation strategies. The administrators use all school data to check on student achievement and to amend the curriculum as appropriate. During the last year, a new social studies program was introduced to respond to an identified change in the test structure. The impact of this new program on results is currently under review. Presently, the school is working on a system designed to raise achievement in mathematics, and to relieve pressure on teachers prior to testing periods. They trialed a process that introduced new, difficult to grasp, mathematics topics in an earlier grade during the final semester. Teachers are reporting that this has improved student understanding as instruction can build on these already familiar concepts. This valuable revision has not yet been formalized and agreed, but doing so would ensure that curriculum expectations for each grade are clarified.

This is a successful school that aims to become even more successful. Improving student achievement is at the heart of all decision-making. The administrators engage in a thoughtful, informed and reflective approach towards meeting their goals. Public School 222 is well placed to continue its upward trend.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Katherine R Snyder School (PS 222)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>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 student progress over time.</b>	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			<b>X</b>
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and 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.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			<b>X</b>
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X