



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Eubie Blake School

Public School 25

**787 Lafayette Avenue
Brooklyn
NY11221**

Principal: Carol Walcott

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Reviewer: Frank Jones

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Eubie Blake School, Public School 25 has 395 students from kindergarten through grade 5. Eighty four percent of the students are Black, 14% are Hispanic and the remaining 2% are White and other ethnic groups. The school was redesignated as an elementary school in September 2007 losing grades 6 through 8. The number of students fell by approximately 400. About a 25% of the school population are special education students. Of the remainder, all are general education students with the exception of twenty-two students who are English language learners. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding. Attendance figures are presently 88.3%, which is below the average of similar and other city schools.

The majority of students enter the school at kindergarten with a small number starting prior to this. The two assistant principals have responsibility for kindergarten through grade 2 and grade 3 through grade 5. The principal has been in post for three years and is the sixth person to hold this position in the last ten years. For the last three years the administration has been more stable. The principal provides strong, sensitive leadership and her two assistant principals support her well.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and her assistants work as a cohesive team to provide strong leadership and direction for the school.
- There is a strong culture of collegiality and mutual support within the school that is reflected in the positive relationships that are evident at all levels.
- There is a high degree of sensitivity and care for all students, specifically those who are vulnerable or experiencing problems.
- Senior staff have fully embraced the concept of how data analysis can inform and bring direction to student learning.
- The school gathers a wide range of academic, personal and medical data, which provides a clear picture of the individual needs and abilities of each student.
- Analysis of current data predicts that results in the New York State tests will rise significantly in 2007.
- The school works effectively with external specialist agencies to identify and provide for the needs of the students.
- The school has successfully introduced a wide range of resources that have already had a positive impact on student achievement in reading.
- The Church Avenue Business Merchants' Association is well integrated in to the school and provides complimentary learning and social experiences for a significant proportion of the school population.
- The school provides a wide range of activities that enrich students' overall experience.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve teachers' understanding and utilization of assessment data so that it informs their instruction and allows them to set long term challenging goals for all students.
- Ensure all teachers consistently differentiate activities so they match the identified learning needs of all students including those of high ability.
- Focus professional development on key features of learning and teaching so that effective strategies are employed and become integrated in all teachers' practice.
- Ensure that all staff implement methods of teaching that are agreed by the school.
- Explore ways in which parents can support the school and assume their role as co-educators.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The Eubie Blake School, Public School 25 is a challenging school that has been through a period of unsettled leadership. The permanent appointment of the current principal and the effectiveness of the two assistant principals have brought with it stability and direction. There is still a high level of staff turnover but the recent hiring of experienced staff has added to the development of learning in the school.

The principal provides sensitive and effective leadership and has high expectations of both staff and students. A key quality of her leadership is the knowledge of and concern she has for each student. She has empowered her senior staff and they work closely together to raise standards and the quality of education for all. They have fully embraced the concept of the power of data analysis and as a result plan appropriate programs for students to meet identified need. Some staff share this understanding and professional development is ongoing to meet professional need.

There is a collegiate approach to developing the school. The cabinet, external agencies and other committees are fully involved in school life and all staff contributed to the preparation of the school self-evaluation form which was an honest and realistic appraisal of the schools strengths and areas for development.

It is not surprising therefore that the areas for improvement identified in this report are predominantly those already identified by the principal and her staff as in need of additional development. Greater use of differentiation of task to pupil need and a further understanding of data use by staff and increased expectation of what the students are capable of has the potential to impact on raising standards significantly. The school has a strong capacity for further improvement.

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 uses a wide range of commercial and statutory assessments and some that the school devises itself. These are analyzed by the leadership team and provide useful information on student achievement for staff. The principal meets monthly with each grade to monitor the progress of individual students and discuss how the data is being used. The assistant principals meet with their teachers more frequently to monitor progress in the interim periods and provide support for individual teachers as appropriate. The school has conference binders for mathematics, reading and writing that are a useful record of what the student knows and can do. Individual assessment profiles are in place for each child but they are not used consistently to inform instruction.

At the beginning of the academic year each student is assessed is made aware of what they must learn as the year progresses. The use of more formal assessments allows the school to monitor levels achieved on an annual basis. This information is used to identify if additional intervention strategies are necessary or if there is a need to provide enrichment activities. Predictions for New York City test results indicate that the level of attainment will rise significantly this year.

The data committee uses headline data to track trends over time and against similar schools. Detailed individual student data which considers all aspects of student development is gathered and used for a variety of purposes including identifying which students may be held over and further disaggregated to identify the performance of different groups, such as ethnic groups or English language learners. The focus is very much on the individual student and identifying what their needs are. The school interprets this assessment data well for purposes that include a class-by-class analysis of performance and to compare the teaching within grades, the latter being a focus of discussion at grade meetings. This information is used to initiate professional development opportunities for individual staff as appropriate

Individualized education plans are in place for special education students who are taught in two self contained classes. The progress against these plans is carefully monitored for progress and modifications. Where possible, and if parents agree, students who are capable of accessing mainstream education do so.

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 proficient

Goals for each child are set in consultation with the principal and her assistants following the analysis of data. This information is then brought together to give a picture of projected achievement across the school. Regular monitoring takes place through discussions with staff and this is further discussed by the data committee and individual progress measured.

Teachers have sufficient information about their students to set realistic and challenging long term goals but they are frequently set against benchmarks and do not therefore reflect individual student potential. When this is not the case, as in the new reading program, students make appropriate and rapid progress matched to their ability. Many teachers deliver a curriculum rather than matching tasks to identified student-learning needs. This results in a lack of teacher expectation and creates slow progress. The principal is aware of this and is providing professional development, which has the potential to enable staff to become more adept at setting the appropriate level of challenge for each student.

Data is well used to identify need and provision for individual students. Expertise from a number of external agencies is welcomed and senior staff display a detailed knowledge of these students. Decisions to increase or decrease support are taken after data on the whole child has been analyzed. Similar information is used to identify which groups of students such as English language learners are out performing others.

There is a clear desire amongst many of the staff to do the best for students but the high expectations promoted by the leadership of what students are capable of are not always reflected in what students are required to do in the classroom. Grade level conferencing takes place and this means that planning is very much a collaborative exercise. Each teacher has a data binder that provides assessment information on each student but these are under utilized.

Parents are informed about the curriculum being offered and the progress that their child is making. Support for students from parents is variable and recent incidents in school have resulted in parents not being allowed access without supervision and an appointment. This situation makes their involvement as co-educators more difficult to fulfill. Students are aware of what is expected of them but at times find the work too easy.

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 proficient.

The school has adopted a curriculum for English language arts based on a multifaceted approach developed by Columbia University Teachers College and other instructional programs which are guided by Regional mandates. The school identifies the needs of the students well and provides programs designed to match them. Programs allow for end of topic assessments and provide useful data to identify the next steps in learning and progress made. The use of this information is not fully utilized by some staff. When it is, as in the early reading program, student achievement and progress is greater.

Assistant principals meet with teachers to set personal goals and progress against them is monitored. Teachers are held to account at grade meetings but there needs to be more insistence that teachers follow agreed practices of instruction to ensure all teachers match tasks to identified student need. This is not always the case at the present time.

The school has invested heavily in a program to improve student reading following analysis of data that identified many students who were not achieving appropriate levels. The student teacher ratio is high and the budget has been used to support this to enable students to access support easily.

Staff retention has been a significant issue at the school in recent years and has impacted adversely on the quality and consistency of instruction. This has been addressed in part by the current principal whose hires and further staff assignments reflect the needs of the students. Training in the use of data is in place for all staff and underpins school development.

Public School 25 is an extended time school that provides additional instruction, as does the Saturday program. Data demonstrates that increased emphasis placed on improving reading and comprehension is impacting positively on student ability to access the wider curriculum. The quality of instruction is variable. Where work is targeted at identified need and taught well, students are engaged and learn, but this is not always the case. Students report that poor behavior can be an issue in some classes and lesson observations identified lack of engagement by some students.

Students are quite positive about coming to school and feel they can talk to a teacher with confidence should a problem arise. The school has made strenuous efforts to improve attendance but despite its best efforts, this remains below that of similar or city schools.

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 proficient.

The principal sets high standards for her self and others and is passionate about improving the opportunities of students in her charge. She is well respected and liked by staff, students and parents. The principal and assistant principals are a very committed team and provide the drive and direction for the school. They are very clear about what needs to be provided for the students and recent staff hires reflect this.

Professional development is closely aligned to the schools goals and is viewed as a key factor in the school's drive to raise standards. Appropriate training precedes the implementation of new initiatives. All staff have laptops and palm pilots on which to keep student data and professional development has taken place to increase teacher understanding of data analysis and its use to inform instruction.

The leadership team knows the capabilities of each staff member well through lesson observations, 'drop ins', sampling of work and discussions with staff. Each teacher has a professional development plan that focuses on specific needs and improving instruction. The principal acknowledges that the impact of the training on the quality of instruction is variable and will need increased focus to ensure teachers understand and implement agreed strategies if learning outcomes are to improve.

Grade meetings take place weekly and teachers welcome the collaboration this affords, the opportunities to work together, to plan and learn from each other. They view the inter-visitations that take place as a useful opportunity to observe and share good practice which has led to clear improvements in, for example, teachers' class room organization and management strategies. The coaches also play an important role in supporting instruction both at these meetings and within the classroom.

Close working with external community based organizations provides additional support for specific students and this is monitored through academic intervention meetings. The Church Avenue Business Merchants' Association is well integrated in to the school and provides complimentary learning and social experiences for a significant proportion of the school population. The school has established routines that are quickly learned and understood by students.

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 proficient.

The leadership team is instrumental in developing the strategic goals for the school and they are set out in the Comprehensive Education Plan and re-affirmed in the principals performance review. The leadership team periodically monitors progress against them but

recognizes that the goals need to be more specific and the monitoring more rigorous so realignment is based on hard evidence. The assistant principals have a clear role in the school in terms of implementing and monitoring the impact of plans. They work well together and form part of a cohesive and increasingly effective leadership team.

School planning is informed by the analysis of data to determine what has been successful as a strategy and what will need to be done next. At whole school level this information can trigger a realignment of the curriculum or more radical changes with the introduction of specific programs to meet identified need. The school has met with success at this level, as analysis of data indicates increased progress and achievement in reading for all students in kindergarten through grade 3.

The school carefully analyzes the impact of any alterations to the planned curriculum on student learning and modifies future plans accordingly. The trend in results is now upward after a significant decline and the principal is committed to seeing this trend continue as a permanent feature.

Close observation and monitoring of student progress are used to inform the best approach to meet student need. Diagnostic tests in mathematics and English language arts take place in each grade. This information is used to adjust intervention levels for students or groups of students and provide enrichment activities as appropriate. The additional support available through the extended day and Saturday sessions are examples of this.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Eubie Blake School (PS 25)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

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.	∅	✓	+
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"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
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"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 			X
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"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
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.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* 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.

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.	∅	✓	+
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.	X		
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.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
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.	X		
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.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

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.	∅	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
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.	∅	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
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.	∅	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		x	