



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Jesse Owens School

Public School 026

**1014 Lafayette Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Michele Ashley

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Reviewer: Helen Donnellan

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public school 26, the Jesse Owens School, is located in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn and occupies a shared site with a middle-high school. The Jesse Owens School serves a population of 404 students. Most of the students live close to the school and 78% are Black, 18% Hispanic, 3% Asian and 1% White. Approximately 3% of students are English language learners and almost 8% are special education students. The school's attendance, at 90% in 2005, was below both similar and City schools. The school is eligible for Title 1 funding.

The principal was appointed in August 2005 and the majority of teachers have been at the school for less than four years.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a supportive and approachable leader who creates a sense of community based upon the needs of the children.
- The principal empowers the staff and helps them to develop as an effective teaching team.
- Standardized and informal assessment data are used very effectively to give an accurate and up-to-date picture of what each student can and cannot do.
- The mandated curriculum is enhanced and extended creatively for all grades.
- Community-based organizations provide enrichment programs that complement the skills and knowledge of teachers.
- Students are excited and engaged about their learning and value being actively engaged in their classes.
- The school has taken successful action to raise student attendance.
- Teachers work collaboratively to plan instruction across grades.
- The principal and staff are open to innovative ways of working, which reflects their commitment to professional development.

What the school needs to improve

- Actively develop the ways in which data is analyzed in all subjects to make it more informative and accessible to teachers.
- Continue to improve instruction so that it more closely matches the needs of all students.
- Ensure that all feedback after formal and informal classroom observations is constructive and developmental.
- Continue to explore ways of establishing and sustaining involvement with 'hard-to-reach' families, so that they can support their children in learning.
- Refine the priorities in the Comprehensive Education Plan to provide staff with detailed actions and specific time-scales.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The Jesse Owens School is one where high standards are the goal for all students. The principal quickly gained the trust and commitment of her staff. This was demonstrated by the 12 volunteers who readily gave up their time to teach an after-school enrichment program in the first term of her appointment. She welcomes new ideas and opportunities which align with her striving for excellence. Data is gathered on all students and ways of presenting information in easily accessible formats are being explored.

Students value the changes in the curriculum and more interactive teaching, ranging from hands-on experience with animals in the science area to learning through play. An open-door policy encourages parents to be actively involved with their children's education and the staff are continually seeking innovative ways of encouraging more parents into school.

Professional development supports improvements the school makes, with classroom observations being part of this. Feedback does not always make clear actions needed to be taken in order for staff to improve, however.

The school environment is calm and a sense of purpose is conveyed by the eye-catching displays in corridors and classrooms. These celebrate students' work and stimulate further thought. The principal's self-evaluation of the strengths and areas for development of the school are accurate.

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 proficient.

The school has an accurate and up-to-date picture of what all students can and cannot do, through the wide range of data and the way that it is analyzed. The principal has established rigorous processes to gather data from standardized and informal assessments on all students. Test scores are broken down to skill and question level analyses. Data are used very effectively to give a holistic view of each child's progress. In-house assessments are extended to give wider insights into student progress than those revealed by City tests alone. Through this the school identified that computation skills in mathematics were in need of reinforcement for grade 4 students.

The progress of special education students is monitored closely. This is illustrated by the careful scrutiny of in-house tests and teacher observations, which indicated lower levels of achievement than some formal test results. While this has resulted in a fall in point scores, the scores now accurately reflect the students' level which is confirmed by work samples and subsequent tests scores.

When examining test results for English language learners, the school also takes into account the time students have spent in this country and in school. This gives a more informed view of progress made. The school is actively developing the ways that data is analyzed in all subjects, recognizing that practice is not as consistent as it should be. Assessment data for mathematics is being reviewed, to make it more informative and accessible to teachers. Where inconsistencies in test scores are suspected, those assessments are probed, compared with previous results to show progress made over time and other assessments, to ascertain each students' true level.

The school monitors performance over time and is aware of how its results compare with similar schools. The analysis of performance by sub groups, such as ethnicity, is at early stages.

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.

The principal has established a tiered process for data to be reviewed by administration, coaches and teachers. She is involved in exploring the data and ensuring that it is applied at each tier. This gives her insights into teachers' perspectives and makes clear her expectations that data will be utilized to inform goal setting and instruction. Teachers use previous data systematically to make projections for students' future results in standardized tests. These are agreed with the principal at meetings for each grade so that all are aware of what the school is trying to achieve.

The focus for teachers is to raise the achievement of students with the lowest scores, so higher achieving students are not always provided with content to challenge and develop them. Reading texts used by students have become more challenging as information from reading records highlights where students have not progressed onto more complex texts when they are capable of doing so. A concern has been to ensure that goals are based upon accurate data and positive actions have been put in place to improve this process. Teachers hold one-to-one conferences with each student to make them aware of what they need to do in order to achieve success in tests. Students are clear about the progress they make in their learning in relation to test results, but say that some teachers are much better than other in helping them to understand how well they have achieved in individual lessons. English language learners receive instruction in general education classes and they are also given individual support in developing English.

The parent co-ordinator works actively with staff to increase parent involvement. Parents are encouraged to participate in school life and support their children in learning. This is valued, but not sufficiently extended to reach the majority of parents. It is recognized as an area in need of further development.

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 principal has brought innovation into the mandated and extended curriculum for all students. She ensures that manipulatives and resources to support Everyday Math are widely used to provide opportunities for students to practice and reinforce their learning. The after-school enrichment program was introduced in the first weeks of her time as principal. Photography, sports, flute, pottery and botany, dance and cultural arts all extend the enrichment program. The chess program is popular with students and provides them with opportunities to practice thinking skills and reflect upon their actions.

Data is inconsistently used to plan activities that are matched to students’ prior achievement, especially for the higher-achieving students. Differentiated instruction is provided in a variety of ways, for instance, some students are moved to higher grades so that they can receive instruction that more closely matches their needs. Higher achieving students are also offered mini-lessons during extended day time, to provide them with instruction at their level. Teachers are aware of their accountability for the students’ progress and are eager to do their best for them.

The principal makes effective use of the school budget and good use of additional staff available to the school. A Leadership Academy intern and a reserve teacher provide valuable additional staffing capacity. Classroom observations and assessment data are used collectively to inform class groupings. This is a collaborative exercise between staff and administration so that there is a common understanding of the needs of each group. Scheduling decisions are made in line with students needs but have to take account of the requirements of the high school when the use of shared facilities is being considered.

The principal’s drive to move away from more didactic instruction and empower the students in their learning has resulted in more opportunities for students to reflect and offer answers to questions posed. This approach engages the students and enables them to show their learning. Students say that they like “Teachers who let us show what we can do and not what they can do.” The rigorous enforcement of the school’s behavior code has led to improved behavior and fewer suspensions and incidents. Students are encouraged to influence the life of the school formally through class president roles. They see that their views are significant and also have good opportunities to practice citizenship skills. They are confident to talk to adults if they feel troubled. Average attendance is now over 92% and is a school priority. A good range of strategies have been put in place to address this at student and parent level. Classes have incentives to achieve 100% attendance and contacts with parents about non-attendance have increased.

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.

When hiring new staff, the principal seeks clear evidence of effective teaching skills and competency with the use and analysis of data. The rigorous procedures provide good insights into the candidates’ suitability for teaching at the Jesse Owens School.

Professional development is seen as vital to build staff capacity to deliver and develop the curriculum, as well as personal career aspirations. Considerable development is linked to the Teachers' College model and the coaches work closely with staff to ensure that this is adapted to match students' needs. Professional development focuses on whole school needs, but its effectiveness is limited; the school recognizes this and plans are in place to rectify this.

The principal and assistant principal observe classes formally and during informal drop-in observations. Written feedback is given to teachers following formal observations and the principal recognizes that some feedback is not as developmental and constructive as it could be. Where feedback is constructive and supportive, teachers receive it positively. Teachers work collaboratively and pool suggestions for working on particular lessons or pieces of work. They learn from each other through inter-visitations, with a requirement that the visiting teacher identifies features to be applied in their own class.

The principal has drawn the staff into an effective collaborative group, who support each other and the administration in delivering instruction. There is mutual trust and respect between the principal and the staff. Parents recognize her calm demeanor, which is an example to students and all those in the school. She has good capacity to effect change. Close working relationships exist with support services and community-based organizations who complement the school's curriculum well. These relationships contribute to a seamless delivery of support and instruction, as reflected in the arrangements for chess instruction, for example.

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 goals within the Comprehensive Education Plan are specific and measurable, so that progress in each area can be monitored using assessment data. The plan does not yet incorporate the interim goals and checkpoints even though the school has established these for its students. The plans goals form part of the principal's performance goals. It is in this process that the progress in relation to the schools' goals is formally monitored. Following this, amendments are made where data shows that realignments are needed in order for goals to be achieved. Priorities within the Comprehensive Education Plan are not broken down into separate plans, so staff are reliant on administration giving them information about what actions are needed at specific times.

Monitoring is an important part of school life. The principal's daily bulletins remind staff to provide data showing the progress of each student against their projected achievement. This ensures that the effectiveness of interventions are continually monitored. The information is used regularly to review progress and, where necessary, amend the intervention or projections for achievement. Standardized tests and in-house assessment data are used effectively in monitoring and review. The whole staff reviews the Teachers' College units at the end of each year, using students' test results and teacher's informal notes made following lessons. This information is then used to influence the plans for curriculum delivery the following year.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Jesse Owens School (PS 026)	∅	✓	+
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	