



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Henry Bristow School

Public School 039

**417 6 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11215**

Principal: Anita de Paz

Dates of review: April 13th & 16th, 2007

Reviewer: Marilyn Lehmann

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

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 39, located in the heart of Park Slope, Brooklyn, was established over 125 years ago, and is housed in a Landmark Victorian building. Providing education for pre-kindergarten through grade 5 the school is currently above capacity with 371 students enrolled of whom 8% are English language learners. There are no self-contained classes.

The student intake is diverse, with 37% Hispanic students, 29% White, 27% Black and 6% Asian and others. The main home language, other than English, is Spanish. Attendance, at 93.4%, is in line with similar and City schools. At present many of the students come from outside the zone but the school is ready to meet the needs of changing local demographics and from September pre-kindergarten seats will be filled entirely by children from the zone.

The number of Title 1 eligible students is declining and the funding will cease at the end of this school year.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- This school makes very effective use of data, which is consistently gathered and is used well to understand what students know and are able to do and to monitor their progress.
- The Principal leads by example, setting the tone, pace and direction of the school, and her high expectations are shared by the staff and successfully conveyed to members of the wider school community.
- Students actively enjoy and participate in lessons and are motivated to achieve well.
- Staff and students treat each other with mutual respect and students feel safe and secure in school.
- Members of staff know the students well and respond sensitively to their academic and other needs.
- Members of staff work effectively in various collaborative teams and are strongly focused on promoting students' achievement.
- Excellent care and attention is given to driving up the performance of students in greatest need of improvement.
- The school has fostered, and maintains, an excellent relationship with all parents, who hold it in high regard and are very active in the life of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop structures to facilitate effective use of student data between grades to inform whole school longitudinal planning.
- Build on existing good practice in professional development to further enhance the range of teaching strategies used to differentiate instruction.
- Further develop the use of data in order to monitor and revise plans and modify goals throughout the year on a school wide basis in response to the ongoing evaluation of students' progress.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

This is the principal's first year in post. She has introduced a number of initiatives including components of the School Wide Enrichment Model (SEM), and student directed inquiry based investigations in social studies. A child study team has been set up and new special education needs protocol and procedures have been introduced.

Public School 39 collects and analyzes a wide range of relevant data and uses it appropriately to inform planning and understanding of students' progress. It makes good use of information that helps it know where it is successful and where improvements need to be planned. It is particularly effective in its use of data across grades and is now seeking to develop whole school curriculum planning.

The principal is ambitious for the school's success. Student performance compares favourably with similar schools in the district and the school is in a good position to continue to develop further.

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 principal and teachers make very good use of data in building their understanding of students' performance. Students are carefully and consistently tracked using a range of objective tests including the standardized tests, formal and informal teacher assessments, and regular in-house testing. For example, the Early Childhood Language Arts Assessment System (ECLAS-2) is used to establish benchmarks, and teacher conference notes identify progress made by individual students.

The data is closely analyzed by the principal and members of staff to identify trends and to monitor and evaluate all students' progress, including English language learners and any students with special education needs. The principal has introduced new procedures to utilize the relevant data so as to systematically monitor the progress of special education students. This has led to a better understanding of their different needs and has enabled teachers, as far as is possible, to find strategies to prevent formal referral.

Performance and progress are measured against previous past performance and results of similar schools to identify strengths and weaknesses. Standardized tests are carefully analyzed for trends and to inform planning. For example, State test results show that English language learners are keeping pace with other learners in mathematics but not in English language arts, which has prompted the school to analyze and seek to redress the causes. Similarly the school has noted the trend of declining progress through grades 4 and 5 which has reinforced the intention to further develop vertical planning in order to drive up performance.

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.

Instructional plans and goals are discussed frequently, often in teachers’ own time, and are agreed collaboratively in grade and cabinet meetings. Members of staff reflect on progress towards achieving these goals as part of planning sessions held in June each year. Planning is particularly effective at individual, class and grade level, and the needs of groups of students are well identified. For example the school has introduced a school wide enrichment programme to enhance the progress of gifted and talented students to which students have responded with enthusiasm and energy. They enjoy the activities and as a result are highly motivated to improve their skills and knowledge. However members of staff agree that whole school planning is not yet fully developed.

Particular attention is given to meeting the needs of students in greatest need of improvement. The pupil personnel committee and academic intervention services have combined to form a child study team that uses student data as a basis for its discussions and decisions about interventions. A new protocol and procedures for teachers have been developed and as a result class teachers understand that they are themselves interventionists and are taking responsibility for trying to meet needs before seeking to refer students.

High expectations pervade the work of the school. The principal sets the tone, but all staff work together to ensure that students are safe, happy and successful learners. Parents feel “fully informed about the principal’s philosophy and vision” and that their contributions to planning are welcomed. The parent of a student with special education needs particularly appreciated the excellent support provided by the school.

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.

A great deal of thought and energy is put into making the curriculum varied, meaningful and challenging. The curriculum aligns well with the mandated curriculum, and lessons are well planned, structured carefully and follow well tested routines and procedures to give students a coherent and purposeful experience. The school’s style can be seen in all classrooms. Work and resources are displayed attractively and classrooms are set out in a way that helps students work collaboratively. Teachers have a very clear understanding of the ways in which they can help children to remain on task and learn effectively. In lessons students know what they are doing, and why they are doing it. They behave well because they are so focused, and because teachers and support staff have such clear expectations of them, so teachers can make lessons more exciting and interesting. As one student said, “teachers do fun things to help you learn”.

Decisions about budgeting, staffing and scheduling are carefully made in response to identified needs; for example the school has budgeted for more teachers rather than an assistant principal or full time coaches.

Members of the school community treat one another with consideration and respect. Students have a high regard for their teachers and feel that they can go to them for help with personal concerns as well as for school work. The positive attitudes of the students, along with the school's excellent relationship with parents and carers, support the time and effort put in by the school to further improve attendance.

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 sets the climate, pace and direction of the school and in doing so gets excellent support from the staff. She is held in high esteem by all members of the school community; students say that they can "talk to her about any problems" and that she "gives people responsibility for their own behavior", teachers perceive her as a mentor and "feel comfortable seeking her advice and help", while parents find her "inspirational", keen to work with parents and "very open to ideas". There is a clear sense of purpose in the building, with people getting on with tasks and, as a result, the school runs very smoothly. Professional discussions take place as a part of the normal routine of school life, and this is further facilitated by the 'railroad' style layout of classrooms.

Members of staff have a high level of commitment to the school and its students, and new teachers are expected to share, and contribute to, the school's culture. The principal regularly visits classrooms and provides formal and informal feedback which teachers deem to be "extremely constructive". The principal is perceived by staff as very receptive to meeting their needs. Teachers share ideas and resources and work closely in a range of collaborative groups, including voluntary planning sessions before, during and after school, which enables them to support each other in evaluating students' progress and planning next steps.

The professional development of teachers is prioritized and the principal and members of staff continue to be active learners. The school supports teachers effectively by providing a variety of well-targeted professional development opportunities both inside and outside the school. Members of staff are encouraged to share skills and good practice through collaborative discussion and by modeling or mentoring. Coaches and consultants' assist with lesson planning and model lessons; for example a consultant from Teachers College is working with grade 3 teachers on teaching strategies for the delivery of the writing program, to further enhance the range of approaches that are used to meet the needs of students.

Students benefit from the school's good relationship with a number of partners, including Making Books Sing, the New York Philharmonic and Arts Connection who provide support for aspects of the curriculum. In addition, parents play a key role in the delivery of the program of school wide enrichment by co-teaching enrichment clusters with members of staff as well as providing after school art instruction for upper grade students, which help contribute to the school's drive to raise achievement.

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.

Plans and goals which feed into, or arise from the comprehensive education plan are discussed and agreed collaboratively in grade and cabinet meetings. The principal's performance plan is closely aligned with the comprehensive education plan. Progress towards meeting agreed priorities is monitored against updated data and the principal's plan is revised regularly throughout the year.

Every student's progress is checked and measured against the stringent criteria of New York State standards as well as the City wide assessments. Teachers are expected to monitor what they do, understand and evaluate what works, what does not work and explain why this is the case. Comparisons of students' progress are made across grades and classes and with similar schools. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of taking a whole school view of the available summative information and knowing what expectations to have for improvement in performance.

There is a consistent approach to teacher assessment because discussion of rubrics and alignment of standards take place on a regular basis. Target setting is carried out three times a year and plans are adjusted accordingly. In both mathematics and English language arts teachers regularly modify plans and curriculum goals in response to their observation of students and review of journals as well as to assessment outcomes.

There are sound structures to monitor each student's progress throughout the year, and interim and yearly planning and evaluation is very well done in classes and across grades, but this is not currently done between grades. The school, however, is well placed to further develop its use of data in order to monitor and revise plans on a school wide basis and modify its goals throughout the year in response to ongoing evaluation of students' progress.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Henry Bristow School (PS 39)	∅	✓	+
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	