



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Jose de Diego School

Public School 094

**250 Berry Street
Brooklyn
NY 11211**

Principal: Stefanie Greco

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Reviewer: Helen Donnellan

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 84, the Jose de Diego School, is located in an area of Brooklyn that is changing due to significant numbers of families moving into an area with a history of long established families. Many students are drawn from local families with links to the school lasting for many years. Other students come from other parts of Brooklyn and Manhattan. There are currently 505 students enrolled, from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Ten percent of the students are special education students. Eighty-two percent of the students are Hispanic; 9% White; 5% Black and 4% Asian. Twenty-seven percent are English language learners, with Spanish being the main language spoken. All students are Title 1 eligible which is higher than that for similar and City schools. Attendance is 92% which is in line with similar and City schools.

The principal was appointed in September 2006 and leads a long established staff. Her aims are to improve instruction, make the child the focus of instruction and create a community of learners. Classes have been provided for members of the community and families of students at the school.

The school has specialist teaching areas for music, art, computer studies, physical education, library and rooms for support staff.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The new principal has quickly established herself as a visible, approachable leader, who addresses under-performance and places the child at the centre of school life.
- The principal and assistant principal work effectively to improve learning outcomes for students, to identify and address under-performance and to create a sense of community within the school.
- The school collects extensive data on all students, using informal records to complement standardized assessment data.
- Students enjoy the creative curriculum, with arts activities enhancing the mandated curriculum.
- Teachers are well-supported in improving instruction and using data, through external training and in-house professional development.
- Collaboration with arts organizations extends the curriculum and gives students opportunities to develop skills from other subjects.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in school life and be active partners in helping their children to learn.

What the school needs to improve

- Collate and present data to show and compare the progress of individual students and groups of students, indicating patterns and issues more readily.
- Ensure that all teachers use assessment data routinely and, base their instruction and goals on the needs of students indicated by the data.
- Establish a cohesive structure for planning, which ensures that school priorities are cascaded into curriculum and grade level plans.
- Increase the opportunities for students to acquire and practice skills in applying technology across the curriculum
- Provide students with a formal organization through which they can influence school life and practice citizenship.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

This principal has quickly identified the school's strengths and areas for improvement and is already addressing these effectively. A major change is the increased involvement with the community. This is well-expressed by parents who commented, 'the school reaches out to families and the community'; 'positive action to get out and reach the family'; para-professional and teachers work hand-in-hand with each other and us'.

The school is a Magnet school for the arts, which has led to a range of working partnerships with arts organizations that enhance the curriculum and are part of a move to less didactic instruction.

The principal found that the self-review process added to her understanding of the school and aspects in need of development. The school judged itself as proficient, in line with the overall outcome of the review.

There is extensive data on the progress of all students, but this is not yet fully applied to the planning of instruction. The processes for establishing school priorities lack rigor and the formal monitoring of progress is inadequate to track the progress of goals. This aspect of the school's work is undeveloped and the administration is taking action to establish effective systems for planning and monitoring.

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 obtains a clear picture of all its students through standardized formal assessments, which are complemented by informal teacher observations. The principal has provided all teachers with assessment information relevant to their students, so that they have up-to-date information on student progress. Data shows that the numbers of students achieving levels 3 and 4 in English language arts and mathematics in grades 3 and 5 rose by at least 10% from 5/2004 to 6/2005.

As well as tracking the progress of special education students and English language learners, records also indicate the levels of support and any accommodations made at that time. This gives more information about how each student achieves their level and how they are developing independence in learning. Records for special education students show progress against the goals in their individual education plans. Progress of students from different ethnic groups is not compared across groups.

Teachers recognize that some students have poor retention of learning over the long summer vacation, so re-assess students at the start of each academic year, rather than relying on data obtained before the vacation.

The school gathers extensive information on students but it is not organized in ways that enable progress to be readily compared and issues highlighted. Extracting information is more lengthy and time-consuming than necessary.

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 ensures that staff in all grades have common planning time together, so that short and medium term plans can be agreed and assessment data shared. In some grades teachers use this time well to ensure that plans focus on the needs of each student, but this is inconsistent. Where instruction is not centered on the needs of students, the priority is on adult-imposed structures which constrain learning opportunities.

Students are well prepared for testing in English language arts and mathematics, which helps them to overcome anxieties about test conditions and materials. Even though the school has an extensive arts program, there is no formal assessment of, or goal setting for, skills and knowledge in art. This means that variations in student progress or learning outcomes is not tracked, so strengths in this subject are not necessarily celebrated or difficulties addressed in a systematic way.

New students to the school, including recently arrived immigrants, are assessed in English language arts, levels of English and mathematics on arrival at the school. This information is considered alongside that in the home survey, to gain fuller knowledge of the student, the family and their needs.

The school has high expectations which are shared with students and parents. When test results become available, teachers meet with each student to discuss scores and how the student will make further progress. Parents are kept informed of progress and how to support their child through twice yearly conferences and workshops on particular aspects of the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to celebrate students’ successes and needs with their families and keep them informed through regular newsletters. Information is routinely provided in Spanish and English; translations into other languages are provided as needed. Where there are concerns about individual students, the principal contacts the parents, to ensure that accurate and consistent information is shared. The principal has initiated the ‘opening’ the school to parents; welcoming and seeking their participation and involvement through regular contact and supporting them in learning too. The recently started community education program has started to provide adults with valuable opportunities to continue their learning and to support them in being effective parents.

The school works closely and purposefully with organizations to support the integration of arts activities into the curriculum and others who provide the parent workshops. Student views are not sought in any formal way, so they have little influence on their school. This does not align with the changed focus for child-centered instruction.

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 strength of the curriculum is how creative arts have been integrated into instruction for all grades. This has been achieved through an externally funded three year program to foster this work and train staff, enabling the school to sustain the work at the end of this time. Project work enhances the curriculum, for example, the “Days of Taste”, when professional chefs work in the school; students explore where food comes from, different ways of cooking and visit restaurant kitchens. The school is well-equipped with computers, but these are under-used by students. The content of the curriculum lends itself to differentiation, thus meeting the needs of individual students. However, not all teachers identify individual student needs carefully enough to match instruction to students’ needs. Formal assessment information is not always scrutinized accurately and considered alongside other data, which can lead to inappropriate interventions. Where teachers do use a range of information, they have a holistic picture of each student and base instruction on their identified needs.

The principal has initiated a review of spending, to ensure that the needs of students can be supported through appropriate staffing levels, group sizes and equipment. Alongside this, she is using a systematic approach to determine how to match the needs of students to staff strengths. Assessment information, lessons observations and insights into effective working relationships are factors being taken into account in considering future staff allocation. Using evidence to determine staff allocation is a significant change for the school. Scheduling accommodates the mandated curriculum and enrichment opportunities from the arts work, through imaginative use of cross-curricular approaches.

Students enjoy the creative, active curriculum and project work, and prefer this to the more formal didactic models of instruction that it replaced. They have the confidence to approach adults with concerns, citing one particular school-aide as a trusted confidante.

The strict processes to follow up non-attendance and discourage parents from taking their children on vacation in school time have been very effective and have led to a rise in attendance during the current academic year. Attendance is now in line with 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 is building the capacity of staff to use data. She uses observations and discussions with teachers to ascertain their skills and attitudes towards using data to improve instruction. This information is used to influence professional development and is a factor in planning staff allocation for the coming year. The established staff means the principal deals with a range of staffing issues, to develop the staff, rather than recruitment procedures.

Teachers are well-supported in improving instruction and using data, through external training and in-house professional development. Sharing good practice is well-established with programmed working lunches and inter-visitations forming part of

professional development. Following external training staff shares their learning with colleagues at turn-key sessions, which spreads the impact across the school. A survey is being used to gather staff perceptions of their development needs, so that future training can match these. Class observations are carried out by the principal and assistant principal, who work to an agreed structure to ensure consistency. Constructive feedback is given to teachers, which recognizes strengths and areas to be improved.

Grade level conferences are scheduled where staff collaborate and plan together, with the administration team present to ensure plans take data and pedagogical changes into account.

The new principal has quickly established herself as a visible, approachable leader, who addresses under-performance and places the child at the centre of school life. She is respected by parents and students. She recognizes that not all staff are willing to make change and some resentment is focused on her as the agent of change. This has not diminished her commitment to continual improvement at the school. Staff are now clearer about procedures as the principal provided a staff handbook at the start of the year. This makes clear roles, responsibilities and procedures to be followed. Students are also clear about the high standards expected of them for academic work and behavior.

The school links well with numerous arts organizations to widen the curriculum and give students opportunities to learn and apply a range of skills. From kindergarten through all grades, students work with artists and performers in creative and performing arts, including poetry, media, poetry and dance which has a very positive impact on their performance.

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 undeveloped.

The school's planning process is undeveloped and lacks cohesion. The principal is working with the school leadership team to review previous processes and priorities, so that the next Comprehensive Education Plan contains relevant goals to enable monitoring to take place through the year. Plans do not link to an overall strategic plan and lack detail about interim goals and how success will be measured. This includes plans for different grades and curriculum areas where changes are made to deal with a particular area rather than forming part of a linked plan for improvement. The results of data on student performance are used consistently to monitor the progress made by individual students. Student test scores are compared to grade level indicators and this information is brought to the cabinet meetings where concerns are raised and changes made to intervention. The increased use of data in reviewing progress and the impact of intervention has raised concerns about the level of challenge within classes for higher-achieving students. The administration addresses this with class teachers and changes are made for those students.

Frequent use is made of informal assessment to modify interventions so that instruction can be matched to students' needs. Formal assessment information is not collated to give an overall picture of the progress of the students consequently this information is under-used.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Jose de Diego School (PS 084)	∅	✓	+
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		