

The Verrazanno Public School

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**Public School 101
2360 Benson Avenue
Brooklyn
NY, 11214**

Principal: Gregg Korrol

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Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

This is a well-established community elementary school with 801 students ranging from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. On entry to school, students display a wide range of skills and experiences. Almost 60% are Asian with other students coming mainly from Caucasian, Hispanic and Black backgrounds. An increasing number of students enter the school as English language learners, some of whom speak no English. The school receives Title 1 funding as over 60% of families are on or below the poverty line. The school has been designated as one of the 200 best schools in New York City and is exempt from the mandated curriculum. Both the principal and assistant principal took up their posts at the start of the current academic year.

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Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Management and leadership are well-developed. The new Principal and Assistant Principal have quickly gained the confidence of students, staff, and parents and are building well on the school's successes.
- Staff is very committed to the school and the community it serves. They work very well as a team of professionals and have a clear shared vision for the future development of the school. Staff morale is high and staff acts as good role models for the students.
- There is a strong community spirit among all who work in the school and the climate for learning is particularly good. This helps students to settle well and develop good attitudes to their work.
- Students reach standards higher than the city average and those seen in similar schools. This prepares them well for their future education.
- Instruction is well-developed and effectively promotes learning. Students say that learning is fun and they rise to the high expectations set by staff. Teachers know their students well and use a range of assessments to ensure that the work is set at a suitable level and provides appropriate challenge.
- Good support is provided for those students who find learning difficult or who are English language learners so that they frequently meet the learning standards by the time they leave school.
- The school provides very effective support for the students' personal, social and emotional development. Consequently, behavior in lessons is frequently outstanding and students show respect for their teachers and each other. They also show increasing levels of maturity and confidence as they are promoted through the grades.
- The school is continuing to develop the curriculum to meet the needs of its students. An interesting enrichment program has recently been introduced and is proving to be very effective in stimulating the students' interests and developing new skills.
- The school provides a stimulating print rich learning environment through display in classrooms and public areas. This helps to set the expected standards and celebrate student successes.
- The school has very effective links with parents and guardians, and tries hard to involve them in their children's learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue the analysis of data to identify differences in the attainment and progress of student groups so that specific programs of support can be developed to drive up standards even further.
- Continue the development of electronic grade books so that students' progress and achievements can more easily be recorded and passed on to teachers.
- Continue to use the newly purchased technology to widen teaching styles and match the variety of learning styles evident within each class. Ensure that the use of technology is planned across different subject areas.
- Continue to place high value on listening to the students' views by developing a school council.

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Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed high performing school.

It is very effective in addressing the needs of its students and helping them to make very good progress. The youngest students settle well because particularly good links are made between home and school and the activities provided are interesting. Students are well nurtured throughout their time in school and flourish in this stimulating learning environment. Leadership and management are very effective because senior managers are totally committed to constant improvement. Effective systems ensure they are aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The areas for development identified in this report are based on enabling a well-developed school to become even better.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria.

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient overall with many well-developed features.

School leaders have a positive approach to the collection and use of data which helps staff improve the effectiveness of their teaching and support. Analysis of data takes place across the school, throughout grades and within classes so that teachers can identify how students' are progressing. The school has a successful record of using qualitative data because teachers are diligent in the way they get to know their students and record their steps in learning. Although the school has always used quantitative data to identify the students' attainment in tests and consequently, their progress over time, less focus has been placed on identifying differential attainment according to gender, ethnic background or other grouping. Because of the interest and skills of the Principal, work in this area has accelerated recently and he is looking towards using data more effectively to drive instruction. However, the school's work is not always as effective as it might be, for example, when making comparisons with similar schools because the information is frequently out of date by the time the school receives it. The Principal has recently devised an electronic record card with the capacity to clearly outline the students' profile, attainment and progress. Although this is a new initiative, it has excellent potential to improve the quantity and quality of data collected as well as making it easier to quickly identify individual progress and attainment. Current information indicates that most students will meet or exceed the expected learning standard.

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

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

The school has effective systems for collecting data on students' progress and attainment and uses this well to identify their specific needs and see how well they are progressing. For example, because data has been used to monitor performance across subject areas and this indicates no significant differences, the school is now placing emphasis on the higher performing students and those who find learning difficult rather than on a specific subject area.

Staff records students' understanding and skills on entry to pre-kindergarten and use this to set activities which help students settle in school and make effective progress with their learning. In kindergarten, regular assessments are undertaken to ensure that the work is appropriate and provides sufficient challenge. In addition, formal assessments are made at the beginning and end of the year so staff can see how well students have progressed. Throughout the rest of the school regular assessments are made, both of a qualitative and quantitative nature. Assessments and test results are used to identify those students who find learning difficult and are not progressing as expected. Specific goals are set for them and additional support provided. The success of the school's work in this area can be seen by the high percentage of those achieving the expected learning standard. Similarly, the school is very effective at identifying the needs of English Language Learners and providing additional specialist support. Data indicates that these students progress very well.

Through an effective analysis of data, staff has identified trends in attendance, which has helped them to pinpoint those students who need to be monitored more closely. Specific interventions have been made, including support from the Parent Coordinator so that parents realize the importance of regular attendance. This is having a positive impact on overall attendance, which is above that in similar schools.

Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

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

The school is exempt from the mandated curriculum but has gradually introduced elements of the English and mathematics programs. Decisions have been made to expand the curriculum rather than pushing forward on existing curriculum areas. Data gained from tests, assessments, observations and discussion is used effectively to identify the next steps in students' learning and the need for intervention and additional support. The curriculum for the youngest students is particularly effective in helping them to settle in school because activities are interesting across all areas of learning. The curriculum for other students is also well matched to their needs because teachers use information gained from a range of assessments to set challenging work. A key feature is the sharing of information during grade meetings, which helps to ensure that students receive similar

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stimulating experiences regardless of which class they are in.

The school provides small group instruction for those students on the borderline between grades to ensure that they achieve as well as they can. This work is proving to be very successful. The curriculum is further extended through a good range of additional activities, visitors and visits to places of interest. The recently introduced enrichment program in grade 5 is very popular with students who thoroughly enjoy learning new skills.

Using information gained from observations and discussions, the Principal and staff have identified the need to purchase new resources such as independent reading books and graded texts for several subjects. These resources have only just arrived in the school but will ensure that students' reading is well matched to their capabilities and enhances learning. Similarly, new computers and SMARTboards have been purchased and the Principal is keen to ensure that these are used to improve the quality of instruction even further. Overall, the quality of instruction is high and a major factor in the progress that students make and the standards they reach. Staff is particularly effective at developing students' speaking and listening skills so they become articulate and confident learners. The quality of students' writing is high. Teachers are very good at celebrating the quality of students' work, which is displayed prominently around the school. The impact of their teaching can clearly be seen, for example, in poetry.

Quality Statement 4: 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 new Principal and Assistant Principal have quickly established a strong working relationship based on a clear vision for the school. Central to this is the drive for high standards alongside a stimulating curriculum which is aligned effectively to meet the needs of all students. Clear goals have been established based on the school's mission statement and a program for development is underway. Teachers respond very well to the new leadership which recognizes the need to maintain the best of the established practice and to develop the use of data to identify areas for improvement more sharply. This can be seen in the 'everyday mathematics challenge' which is set in response to the need to develop students' problem-solving skills. Relationships are excellent and staff morale is high. All are keen to develop their practice through regular professional development opportunities, and these results in a school that is constantly seeking to improve. This is reflected in the particularly good progress that students make and rising standards over recent years.

Regular observations take place to build up a picture of the quality of instruction. This data is then shared with staff during Instructional Team Meetings and areas for development are identified. Because staff is confident and feels well supported, they are keen to share their expertise and experiences with the sole aim of improving whole school practice. Discussions at grade meetings ensure that this information impacts on lesson planning so that the activities set match students' capabilities and ensures that learning progresses at

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a good rate. Regular discussions with students ensure that they are aware of how to improve their work.

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

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

All staff members work well as a team and are involved in the school development planning process. Because of this, they can clearly identify the school's strengths and areas for development. Systems are particularly effective in identifying those students who need additional support as well as the need to adapt the curriculum and develop instruction. Information generated by interim assessment is used effectively, as is that gained by observation and discussion with staff and students. This has helped the school to identify current priorities linked to its overall goal of raising standards and improving the curriculum and instruction. Specific developments include differentiation of instruction to match the various levels of capability within each lesson, balanced literacy, everyday mathematics and the improved use of technology. Key to the school's success is the dynamic and enthusiastic staff that is keen to try different methodologies and adjust these over time based on analysis of their effectiveness.

Other key observations

Student personal, social and emotional development is very well supported. This enables them to become increasingly confident and eager learners. The school places great emphasis on gaining information about their views, for example, through discussion in lessons and more formal meetings with the Principal. The school is now in a good position to continue with this work through the establishment of a school council where staff can more regularly and systematically take note of the student voice. Students are happy at school and feel cared for and valued. They feel part of the school community and are eager to contribute to its development. High expectations are set and students respond positively. Many parents and care-takers are very supportive of the school and raise funds to supplement its resources. Staff is eager to encourage greater participation. Parents are kept up-to-date with how their children are progressing and become familiar with what is expected through parent/teacher meetings and attendance at the pre-test workshops.

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PART 4: EVALUATION CRITERIA GRADE SUMMARY

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.	o	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English Language Arts, mathematics, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are "objective" when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards-based, • consistent across students, • capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice, <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the performance of different students to be compared, and • learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified. 			X
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>			X
<p>1.3 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, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>		X	
Quality Statement 2: 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.	o	✓	+
<p>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 it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>			X
<p>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 warranting attention.</p>			X
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>			X
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>			X
<p>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</p>			X

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Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	o	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.			X
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.			X
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. 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
3.6 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
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	0	✓	+
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 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 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.			X
Quality Statement 5: 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.	o	✓	+
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 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 interim 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 each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.			X