



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Blythebourne School

Public School 105

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Brooklyn
NY 11219**

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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

The Blythebourne School has 1,248 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school's largest ethnic group is Asian. At 81% this is considerably higher than similar and City schools. The rest of the school's population comprises 10% White students, 9% Hispanic students and a small proportion of students from Black and other ethnic groups. The proportion of English language learners at 44% is far higher than similar and City schools. The main languages spoken in addition to English are Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, Urdu and Arabic. In total 23 languages are spoken including English. The proportion of special education students is 3% which is much lower than in similar and City schools. The school receives Title 1 funding. At 96%, attendance is much higher than similar and City schools.

As an Empowerment School, Blythebourne School has more flexibility to make key decisions and control resources for their school community. Empowerment Schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principals give clear leadership about the school's expectations and mission for its continued improvement.
- All cultures are valued and celebrated.
- Students are attentive in lessons because of their excellent attitudes to learning, the positive relationships and school's nurturing atmosphere.
- Students are well-behaved, polite and thoughtful to each other's feelings.
- All staff work effectively as a team to create the positive, family culture in the school.
- Teachers work effectively as a team to share ideas and evaluate their work, reflecting a strong commitment to improving students' learning experiences.
- Parents are very supportive of the school's work and feel their contribution is valued.
- The school gathers an extensive range of data which is used efficiently to organize a class structure that support all English language learners, especially those at the early stages of learning the language.
- The curriculum is very well organized and identifies good links between subjects and adds purpose and meaning to learning.
- English language learners make good progress because the school places good emphasis on developing opportunities for students to practice their speech.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that school goals are more specific to the areas for development identified by data analysis and set a measure that links to students' expected end of year performance.
- Formally record the school's goals and benchmarks for raising the achievement of different groups of students.
- Ensure that data is used in all classes so that instruction is differentiated consistently well and so engages learners fully.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The school's nurturing climate is a direct result of the commitment of all staff to create an environment where everyone's contribution is valued. Good focus is given to nurturing whole families through strong relationships and the many events organized by the parent coordinator, guidance counselor and student leadership team. The school's wide range of cultures is celebrated and valued. For example, everyone joined together to enjoy dance, music and song to welcome in and celebrate the Chinese New Year.

The school uses the designated periodic assessment materials very well to generate data. The data is used effectively to track progress of individuals, and to organize classes, after school intervention and enrichment groups. As a result, English language learners make good progress and those just starting to learn English make very good progress.

The school evaluated itself as proficient in all aspects because it has such high expectations of itself and knows that there is always more that can be improved. The review considers it to be better than this and that it is well developed in nearly all aspects. The drive to ensure all teachers use data consistently well to differentiate instruction in all classes and engage all students fully in learning is ongoing due to the large size of the school and constant changes in staffing.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

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

The school gathers a comprehensive range of data which it uses effectively to measure how much progress students make from kindergarten through grade 5. Information from the Princeton Review, the early childhood literacy assessment system, New York State English as a second language achievement test and teachers' own classroom assessments are kept in a clear format that enables the data to be accessed quickly. Some data is collated on computerized systems that enable the school to analyze quickly, by ability, gender and ethnicity, how well students are performing. Data is further disaggregated by the languages spoken within each ethnic group, students who are close to moving up or slipping back a level, higher achieving students and low income groups. The information is used particularly well by the school's leadership to plan and organize support for English language learners to help them reach their potential.

The school compares its performance each year to gain a good picture of how well students are doing compared to previous years, by class and by grade in tested subjects. The data is used to improve the performance and progress of targeted individuals and different groups of students. In addition, data is used well as evidence to support the evaluation about the quality of teaching and to inform professional development needs.

Rubrics for achievement in reading, writing and technology align with grade standards and give additional data that helps the school track progress in these subjects. The school compares its performance with other schools in its group. The school compares itself against City schools because of its unique characteristics and context. This is a much more challenging benchmark for the school but reflects its high expectations.

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 well developed.

The school involves all members of the school community when setting goals for the year ahead and so a commitment to improve achievement drives everyone’s work. Teams meet to write plans that outline the action to be taken to reach the identified goals. These include measures that are focused on improving students’ performance year on year and for checking how successful the school has been in bringing about improvement. As yet, goals are focused on the programs and interventions the school intends to implement rather than on what it plans to achieve and so measures are not linked specifically to students’ actual expected end of year performance.

The school is particularly successful in improving the progress and performance of all English language learners. The school makes sure that special education students work in general education classes for reading and mathematics if they are achieving at or above grade standards. Groupings and planned programs are flexible to meet students’ changing needs as they improve or need specific help for certain periods of time during the year. In addition, the wide range of after school intervention programs, including Saturday academy, targeted at students who need extra help or enrichment ensures that these students to achieve well.

Rubrics and regular conferencing activities enable teachers to share interim goals and next steps in learning with students. As a result, most students know what and how to improve. Parents are fully included in the process and so are able to support their children’s education effectively. Parents are given good information about how well their children are doing in school and are given good guidance on how to help their children with homework. This is particularly effective in supporting mathematics achievement and is one key factor for high performance in this subject.

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 with well-developed features.

The school follows the mandated programs for English language arts and mathematics. The curriculum for science and social studies is mostly organized so that knowledge and skills in one subject are developed through another. For example, students in grade 2 designed their dream house in an integrated/social studies unit, described it in literacy, created computerized designs and made pictures and models of the house in art. These links add purpose and relevance to learning and successfully engage students’ interests. English language learners get good opportunity to practice their speaking skills in lessons

and through programs such as the theater arts program. A wide range of enrichment activities such as ballroom dancing classes adds to students' enjoyment of school.

Systems for using data to make budget, staffing and scheduling decisions are integrated in the school's work. The school uses data well to organize classes so that differentiated needs can be met more easily. Bilingual classes for those at the early stages of learning English, 'Globe' (gifted learners of bilingual English) classes and English as second language classes meet the needs of English language learners at different abilities and stages of learning English particularly well. Additional support from paraprofessionals and push in for English language learners and for students at risk of not reaching grade standards ensure suitable differentiation of instruction for these students.

Teachers are held accountable for differentiating instruction. They use data carefully to put students into groups for guided reading activities, to develop specific skills and match book levels to different abilities. Many teachers use resources and a range of questions well to differentiate instruction. However, there are still many lessons where learning is overly directed or where students complete the same work regardless of prior knowledge and skills. In some classes students need more help with independent learning tasks while others are asked to do work that is not challenging enough. As a result, students are not always sufficiently engaged in these classes. Students usually enjoy lessons that use Smartboard technology and computers because they capture their attention. Science and art classes are particular favorites because they are practical and involve them actively in learning.

The school places equal emphasis on students' personal and social development. For example, the creation of a 'dream quilt' gave students good opportunity to discuss what life could really be like if their dreams came true. The student leadership team is fully involved in organizing family nights and charity fund raising events. Its views are sought and considered by the school leadership when making decisions about some aspects of the school's work. All students feel able to ask for help with academic work and personal concerns and are enabled to do so because at least one member of staff or volunteer parent speaks their language.

Attendance is monitored extremely rigorously. There is a strong commitment from parents and their children to attend regularly because attitudes towards getting a good education are excellent.

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 school has effective systems in place to select staff who share the school's dedicated approach to developing the whole child and in their ability to use data to inform their work. Changes to staffing occur every year and with such a large school this presents challenges in establishing consistency in the way teachers use data to differentiate instruction.

Professional development has been a particular focus of the school's work and is driven by teachers' needs and by areas of weakness revealed in performance data. New teachers benefit from experienced mentors to help them with planning effective instruction, which helps the school build capacity again quickly. Teachers regularly visit each other's classes

to share ideas and give each other feedback on what methods are successful and which ones are not.

The principal, assistant principals, coaches and outside consultants visit classes regularly to evaluate the impact of recent initiatives including professional development and to give valuable feedback on how to differentiate instruction and engage learners even more. Teachers meet regularly to collaboratively evaluate practice, revise programs and plan next steps in learning. Discussions are honest and open because the school's leadership considers that the identification of areas for improvement is a strong focus.

The principal is highly respected by students, staff, parents and the wider community. Students have excellent attitudes to school, behave extremely well and have impeccable manners. These, in addition to clear communication systems and routines, and the staff commitment, ensure that the school runs very smoothly on a daily basis.

The school has good partnerships with outside organizations that help it to reach its goals. Outside consultants have helped to revise the school's curriculum to make it interesting and relevant to students learning. The school joins with community and theater groups for art and drama projects and cultural celebrations. Visits and visiting artists make valuable contributions to learning in all subjects.

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 well developed.

Comprehensive systems enable the school to immediately evaluate how well it is doing and where it is not doing so well. All staff members and good support from outside consultants are involved in the continuous evaluation of the school's work. The systematic monitoring and evaluation processes result in the school having a clear understanding of how individual students, and each class and grade is performing especially in English language arts, mathematics and science. The process is cyclical and each year's evaluations drive the following year's goals.

The school has clear objectives and interim goals which are recorded in minutes of the range of meetings held to discuss students' work and progress. Measures in the Comprehensive Education Plan and the school's own strategic plan identify annual incremental increases in students' performance. These measures are not precisely linked to the expected performance of specific groupings of students identified by data as in need of improvement. In addition, the benchmarks the school uses throughout the year to help the senior leadership to monitor groups of students' progress towards reaching the school's goals are not always formally recorded.

The school achievement team and instructional cabinet regularly compare students' progress across classes, grades and subjects and plan support for those students who need extra help to reach their potential. The school continues to build capacity by further developing teachers' use of data to align instruction and engage all students fully. As a result, students' achievements continue to grow and the school continues to outperform City schools in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies every year.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Blythebourne School (PS105)	∅	✓	+
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