



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Ovington School

Public School 176

**1225 69Street
Brooklyn
NY 11219**

Principal: Elizabeth Culkin

Dates of review: December 12 – 14, 2006

Reviewer: Frank Jones

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

Ovington Public School 176 is a barrier-free school with 1140 enrolled students from kindergarten through grade 5. Fifty percent of the students are from Asian backgrounds, 30% White, 16% Hispanic and 4% Arabic. Just over 20% of the students are English language learners when they enter the school which is higher than found in similar schools. A total of 15 languages are spoken which reflects the diverse population of the school.

Approximately 9% are special education students, including those who are physically challenged and medically fragile. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding. Attendance figures are presently 95%, which is above that of similar and City schools.

Public School 176 is committed to being an inclusive community where all strive for personal excellence and is one of the Chancellors 200 highest performing schools. The school's organization is new this year. It is organized into three age groups, kindergarten and grade 1, grades 2 and 3 and grades 4 and 5. The principal and assistant principals each have responsibility for one of these groups. The school is housed over 5 floors and classes in grades 2 through 5 are mixed together on each floor to reflect the value the school places on being inclusive. With the exception of the fifth floor, students with physical disabilities are fully included in this organizational structure.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides exceptional leadership and a strong direction for the school.
- Achievement is high and students make consistently good progress.
- The need of the student is at the heart of all the school does and this is reflected in the culture of the school.
- The school generates a wealth of data that is analyzed rigorously and the resultant information used to improve instruction and progress.
- The school passionately believes that all children should be included in everything and so is successful in providing for the needs of all children; whatever their abilities.
- The school has high aspirations for all and sets challenging goals for all students.
- The school is a learning organization and so links professional development closely to individual needs and has a positive impact on learning.
- A range of staff are involved in decision making and communications are good.
- Staff support for each other is exceptionally good.
- The school provides a rich learning environment through its presentation of student work.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that both assistant principals have more responsibility for the strategic and operational running of the school.
- Evaluate the new organizational structure of the school to ascertain the impact on the workload of the senior team.
- Monitor more closely the effectiveness of the programs it delivers as the composition of the student population changes.
- Continue to monitor the match of work to student ability until it becomes a fully embedded differentiated instruction strategy.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

Ovington School cares exceedingly well for all its students who, as a result, receive an excellent start to their education. The concern for each child as an individual and the focus on ensuring learning is the best it can be has ensured that, since the current principal was appointed in 1999, achievement has risen year on year. Students develop in confidence, are articulate and learn in an environment where striving for excellence is the norm and where everyone is expected to succeed.

The school understands and uses data very well to identify the learning steps of each student. This, linked to a rich and challenging curriculum, ensures that education is exciting and students are highly motivated as a result. Similarly teachers are learners too and so are keen to develop their own expertise through professional development activities, visiting each others classes and having ongoing discussions with colleagues. Underpinning all of this is the strong, energetic leadership of the principal who is passionate about education and the need for all students to fulfill their potential. Parents recognize this and are highly appreciative of and involved in their children's learning.

The school provides students with a happy, caring and stimulating environment, which is fundamental to the consistent and significant success they achieve. This school is a caring community where all work for each other.

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 regularly collects and analyzes a wide range of information gained from assessments and tests that provide teachers with detailed data on the performance and progress of each individual student. Teachers are confident in the use and analysis of data to monitor and measure the achievement and progress of all students.

The principal uses headline data to track trends over time and against similar schools. This information has identified that the Hispanic population performs less well than other ethnic groups within the school. Analysis of demographic data suggests that the number of Hispanic students may increase over the coming years and the principal recognizes that this would impact on the programs that the school will need to deliver.

Progress of individual students is measured and monitored through grade meetings, work scrutiny and formal assessments. All teachers know their students very well and consistently use the data to compare how well all students are doing across grades and classes including the lower achievers, the gifted and the middle achievers. Teachers use a combination of teacher assessments, conferencing and checklists along with established department of education assessments.

This barrier free school is by design a very inclusive school. It measures and checks the performance of those students with challenging physical disabilities and those who have special needs. The progress of the student population who are academically talented is also analyzed and their performance effectively monitored.

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’s good use of a wide range of assessment information supports the setting of long term student goals and in ensuring that students make good progress. The school’s aspirations for each student are informed by their potential and learning needs not by test levels, consequently achievement is not confined by age related barriers. Exemplar texts and the breakdown of a level into smaller steps ensure that teachers grade students’ work accurately. Teachers make sure that they help students to know and understand what they are doing well and what they need to do in order to improve.

Regular meetings of different staff groupings where all participants share and air their views, with knowledge and clarity, are a strong feature of this school. The principal leads these meetings effectively. They are highly focused with a clear purpose, setting challenging goals for improving instruction and ensuring that all students are set work which supports and challenges them to do their very best.

All members of staff are committed and mutually supportive. They meet informally together to reflect upon the suitability and appropriateness of the next learning step for individual students and refine their joint planning accordingly. The sharing of such expertise ensures that teachers’ planning is well matched to the needs of all students. Students having difficulties are quickly identified, resulting if appropriate in a referral to and support from a wide range of support services. Members of these services are often a part of the school and work together to share information extremely well ensuring a coordinated and successful approach to students and their families.

Expectations for all students are very high and these are shared with students and their parents who are kept well informed on a regular basis often by phone. Progress towards the goals is regularly tracked and new goals are then set which ensure that learning is challenging for each student.

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 is work well developed.

The way instruction is planned and modified according to the needs of grades, classes or individual students is impressive although the implementation of differentiated instruction is not consistent across the school. Differentiated activities are less evident in some classrooms. This issue is recognized by the school and is a focus for school development. The school curriculum is firmly based on relating and applying learning to real life situations. High expectations of what students are able to achieve and a constant review

of progress ensures that the school is successful in developing all areas of learning. This is further developed through a wide range of enrichment activities both during and after the school day, at weekends and in the evenings. The school boasts a school band and the development of violin playing across the school gives an additional dimension to what the school offers.

Students are encouraged to explore, investigate and articulate their views, which they do with coherence and confidence. The students are well motivated and relate easily to each other and their teachers. The school considers students' personal and academic development equally and, in doing so, serves all students well in their understanding of the needs of those around them. Parents are very appreciative of the way the school encourages their children to excel in as many areas as possible. Attendance is carefully monitored and parents are quickly contacted if a student is absent, to ascertain the reason why. Behavior is very good and attitudes are extremely positive.

Students enjoy their lessons and are confident that they can go to any teacher should they have a problem either personal or academic, knowing they will be listened to and every effort will be made to resolve the issue. Despite its size this is very much a family school. The new organizational structure; where the principal and assistant principals take responsibility for specific sections of the school, supports this culture, but places significant additional work on the principal.

The school budget is used carefully to support the curriculum and planned improvements. Parents work tirelessly to raise extra funds to ensure that their children have the resources to promote the best opportunities for learning. The principal uses data to inform staffing and resource requirements. These have included the purchase of science resources to further enrich the subject and to provide additional opportunities for students to learn through practical and experimental activities in line with the schools philosophy for learning.

Teachers are held to regular account for the progress students make in their classes. There is a good match of both personnel and resources to reflect the identified abilities of staff and the needs of students and the curriculum. Effective scheduling supports the needs of those with disabilities, English language learners, special needs students and for the gifted and talented students who receive more challenging work in the delta classes.

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 provides exceptional leadership and strong direction for the school. Staff are selected for their empathy with students, high expectations and their competence in the use and analysis of data to raise standards of student achievement. They work well together and are very focused on meeting the needs of all students

The principal sets exceptionally high but realistic expectations of what she and others do and need to do. The principal and her assistants regularly make classroom observations, check students' work and talk to students about their learning. As a result of this information, high quality professional development is planned and organized to ensure it makes the best possible impact on learning and instruction. Teachers welcome this support because they are encouraged to reflect on their practice and development needs.

This school is a learning organization where all feel comfortable in receiving and offering support to each other.

The principal is very successful in communicating and sharing her high expectations with everyone connected with the school. She is held in the highest esteem by staff, parents and students. She is well supported by her staff and the school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The two assistant principals are relatively new to their positions. The principal recognizes the importance of giving them greater responsibility for the operational running of the school. The school also recognizes that if they are to continue to consistently meet the learning needs of students then the match of work to student ability must be further developed to become an embedded instructional strategy.

The principal and staff have fully engaged with the concept of a barrier free school and as a result, it offers highly developed learning programs which are supported by the high involvement of other bodies outside the school.

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.

The way that the analysis and use of data focuses on learning and permeates the school's practice is a major strength. All areas of the school's work are carefully planned drawing on all available data, and kept under constant review by all staff and those with specific additional expertise. There is systematic monitoring and revision of planning for subjects and students' progress throughout the school. As a result, staff regularly plan, evaluate and revise interventions and initiatives according to the students' individual needs. All staff members are closely involved in review and decision making so that the goals that are determined by the results of data analysis are supported by other professional assessments.

The Comprehensive Education Plan reflects and underpins the direction of the school. Progress is measured against its goals during the year and reviewed as a whole on appropriate occasions.

The principal leads a team with a high level of commitment to further improvement. The staff consider that the school's high achievement derives from a combination of extremely high expectations, commitment and precise use of data to guide instruction and determine students' learning needs. Despite the school's success it remains driven with a passion to continue to provide only the best for each student. This desire is encapsulated in the school motto, 'Believe it, achieve it.' This school is not short of belief or achievement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Ovington School (PS 176)	∅	✓	+
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			
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