



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Alfred De B Mason School

Public School 226

**6006 23rd Avenue
Brooklyn
NY11204**

Principal: Stephen Porter

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

This is an elementary and middle school in Brooklyn with over 700 students enrolled in grades pre-kindergarten through 8. Currently, 42% of the students are White, 38% are Asian and 28% are Hispanic. There are a very small number of Black students at the school, which is in receipt of Title 1 funding. . Numbers of students from families who are recent immigrants into the United States are above the city average, with the biggest numbers arriving from Pakistan, China and Albania. There are 119 special education students and 157 students who are English Language Learners. A significant proportion of students have a previous record of low achievement. Attendance levels are 95% which is above City and similar schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is an effective leader with a clear sense of purpose who has a high profile around the school, is well liked by students, teachers and parents alike and is held in the highest regard.
- Staff know and respect students and respond very well to the personal needs that affect their academic performance.
- Comprehensive administrative systems have been established to effectively collect data in order to promote student progress.
- There is an excellent team ethos among the teachers and good professional development is promoting the goals of the school well.
- Staffing decisions are driven by the data collected in order to develop and improve student outcomes.
- The principal has accurately analyzed the school's strengths and weaknesses and has instigated strategies for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction.
- Parents are very pleased with the progress their children are making and like the well ordered calm atmosphere.

What the school needs to improve

- Achieve consistency amongst the staff in the use and interpretation of progress data.
- Ensure that teachers are more involved in observing each other's classroom instruction with the goal of further improving student outcomes.
- Improve the strategic planning to be over a longer period to enable the school to be more effective.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school's distinctive character is apparent in the warm family atmosphere. The caring staff are establishing a secure basis for its continuing development. Students are provided with core skills and knowledge to support them in successive stages of their school careers. Performance in writing and reading is improving and students are more involved now with their learning. Test data indicates a rise in levels of achievement. Data is beginning to be used well to establish teaching and learning objectives, which are geared to the needs of the students. Staff are extremely supportive of each other and are flexible in their attitudes to change. The school is open to ideas and values the contributions which are made to its development by parents and staff. The improved attendance figures are an indicator of the support parents are giving the school. The commitment of the principal and staff is evident and means the school has the capacity to maintain and build upon its current achievements.

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 baseline data collated for all groups of students is comprehensive. Each member of staff has performance information for every student in their class. This includes all test scores and an analysis of individual levels attained. The administration regularly disseminates ongoing information gained from assessments and tests, which provide teachers with up-to-date data on the performance and progress of students. Staff are becoming more experienced in the use of this information to revise goals and plans. The school is inclusive. There is an appropriate focus on the data for the high proportion of English language learners and special education students. The data is beginning to be used well to compare the progress of students in each class and grade to ensure that instruction is equally effective for all.

The principal and his assistants also compare students' progress year on year. This has shown an improvement in test results, particularly for English language learners and highlighted the need for alternative testing for special education students. Test data shows that the percentage of higher achieving students at levels 3 and 4 has increased when compared with city-wide and similar schools over the last three years. The percentage of lower achieving students at level 1 and 2 has decreased. Standards at levels 3 and 4 are above both city and similar schools.

The school analyses its results well by academic subject area to enable staff to identify areas for improvement. With the focus on looking at the progress of individuals there is room to developing the analysis of the performance of different *groups* of students. For example, by grade 8 why is the performance of girls much stronger than that of boys in

both English and mathematics. Similarly, with the percentage of students whose families are recent immigrants into the United States much higher than the city average there is a need to look carefully at the comparative performance of students from different ethnic groups.

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 school’s use of a range of assessment information enables the setting of whole-school goals and ensures that students make good progress, particularly in English language arts and mathematics. Teachers have also become more accurate in grading students’ work. This helps students to know and understand what they are doing well and what they need to do in order to improve. Staff meet regularly to reflect upon the suitability of the next learning step for their students and refine their plans accordingly. This ensures that teachers’ planning is well matched to the needs of all students. There is a good team ethos among staff and an excellent support structure which enables teachers to get help when they need it.

Teachers adapt their methods of instruction to ensure that each student makes progress. Staff share ideas and discuss students’ progress individually, by class and grade level to reduce the chance of underachievement. Where it is necessary to refer underachieving students to community services, this is done efficiently with care being given to ensure that the needs of those in greatest need of improvement are met. The school sometimes cannot respond as quickly as it would like to the needs of English language learners when they are also identified as special education students, as they have to wait for the official testing procedures to be implemented.

Parents are kept well informed of their child’s program and are actively involved in discussions about their child’s progress. The school sees working closely with parents and carers as essential to students’ progress and tries hard to involve them in their children’s learning.

Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community.

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 staff are hard working and committed to the development of the school. They are eager to improve their skills and readily involve themselves in professional development. Faculty are eager to use data effectively to improve their students’ achievements. The leadership team monitor teaching regularly, but teachers do not observe each other’s classroom instruction sufficiently to enable further development and improve their own performance.

The well balanced curriculum has a clear focus on English language, mathematics and science. This, together with the good teaching apparent throughout the school, is effective in motivating the students to work hard. Appropriately differentiated instruction meets the needs of different ability groups as evidenced from the data collected. Student attitudes to learning are very positive. Every student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who will help them should they need it. Staff know their students and achievement has improved markedly as a result, particularly for special education students. The school schedule is amended to provide additional support in English and mathematics for those students who are achieving at the lower levels.

Budgeting decisions are made in response to the needs of the students as evidenced by the development of appropriate literacy programs. Staffing appointments are made in response to the need of the students. For example, additional support staff are provided to implement programs for special need students.

The principal is also well supported by his administrative team; the school runs smoothly on a day to day basis in quiet good order. The partnership with external agencies works well for the support of students in need of some form of intervention strategy. Attendance has consistently improved during the last two years. It increased to 95% last year, which reflects a good improvement and is better than similar schools and city schools. Any absences are followed up efficiently as attendance is given high priority.

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.

Staff turnover is low. They enjoy working in this happy school which runs smoothly as routines are well established and everyone is well supported. Staff are carefully selected and work together extremely well. Everyone is a committed member of the team. The principal provides clear, focused and effective leadership. He is widely respected throughout the school by staff, students and parents alike, for his caring attitude and the way he always takes the trouble to make the students feel at ease. The principal regularly checks on the quality of the teaching and learning and is successful in communicating and sharing his expectations with his staff. He is appropriately supported by his assistant principal who is equally committed to improving the progress made by the students. Work is beginning to be more focused on student progress and teachers are more committed to improving individual student's results. Teachers do not, as yet, get enough opportunities to observe best practice in other classrooms.

The principal has high expectations. Parents attribute the success of their children to his caring attitude. The school is characterized by its care for students. Every child is well known and treated as an important individual.

The school works appropriately with a range of services to support students' academic and social and artistic needs. Visiting specialists and coaches extend teachers' experiences with fresh ideas and enhance the learning experience for lower achieving students.

The school recognizes the need to identify how teachers can participate in professional development. Staff are hard working, eager to develop their professional skills and eager to see students progress. However, most of the recent initiatives are still too new to show any significant impact on student outcomes.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school's monitoring and review processes are still evolving. The systematic analysis of data to benchmark progress has provided a good foundation for the process. At classroom level teachers are self evaluative and are willing to take advice. The review process for individual classes has been helpful in this respect. Decision-making is shared and plans are prepared as a result of data analysis and teachers' knowledge of how individual students progress. The school is aware of the progress made by students in relation to other schools by interim diagnostic assessments. In practice the distinctions between reviewing students' portfolios and the implications this has for the teacher in terms of how and what they teach could be more clearly described. The assessment folder compiled by each teacher is an effective mechanism for making interim evaluations of students' progress and an appropriate tool for intervention strategies. It allows the school to show some flexibility in amending its planning in the light of evidence acquired during the course of the year.

The monitoring of teaching in classes is mostly completed by the leadership team to establish clear expectations and common approaches. Teachers do not regularly review and monitor each others' classroom practice to see how this could improve student outcomes.

Priorities for the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) are established as a collaborative exercise. However, although the plan is explicit, its use as a tool to guide improvement is limited. This is because it is not sufficiently costed, does not set out interim goals and is over too short a timescale to be really effective in improving student achievement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Alfred De B Mason School (PS 226)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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	