



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Emma L Johnston School

Public School 241

**976 President Street
Brooklyn
NY 11225**

Principal: Phillip Dominique

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Reviewer: Martin Pavey

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Emma L Johnston School is an elementary school in central Brooklyn, providing an education for students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. There are currently 630 students enrolled. Around 90% of students come from Black backgrounds and other students are mostly of Hispanic heritage. There are 54 special education students. The number of students classified as English language learners has increased over the years, and now stands at 13.5%. Over 90% of students are Title 1 eligible which is a higher proportion than City and similar schools. Attendance was 92% in 2005, just below the average for City schools, but is currently at 94%. The school provides a good level of support for its students and a large number of extra programs – academic, cultural and social.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teaching is good, at all levels.
- The school's excellent partnership with parents has had a major impact on students' progress.
- The school uses data very well, at all levels, to help students improve their performance.
- Students' attitudes and behavior are very good.
- Support services for students are well organized and effective.
- Good partnerships with community-based organizations help students develop skills and broaden their interests.

What the school needs to improve

- Use data to accelerate students' performance in science and social studies.
- Develop the process of writing by building up skills faster and more securely.
- Increase students' use of technology to help them develop their range of skills.
- Inject pace and challenge into the early childhood program so that students make a speedier start to their learning.
- Identify specific professional development to increase teachers' knowledge and understanding in those areas which the school has targeted for improvement.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

This is a happy and successful school. Sound results come from good use of data at all levels. The principal and assistant principals analyze and explain data very well, so that all teachers are aware of its significance for their students' progress and achievement. Data is carefully explained and shared with parents so that they understand the progress their children are making.

The school has high expectations for its students and expects them all to make good progress. These expectations are admirably conveyed by the parent coordinator, who works tirelessly with parents in the interests of the families and their children. Parents commend her work very highly.

Parents, staff and students respect and admire the principal, who sets demanding standards, but who knows and warmly cares for every child. He and his well respected assistant principals are always around the school and know exactly what is going on. The result is a school with well behaved, hard working and happy students which is very well run. This gives teachers the chance they need to teach well and enables the school to provide a wide range of extra programs, both for academic and personal support and for students' cultural and social development.

The school is well aware what it needs to do in order to continue its record of improvement. It intends to 'raise the bar' and has every prospect of doing so.

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.

Teachers know their students and their levels of performance very well. The school makes very good use of the test data it receives. State and City test results are immediately shared, first with the administration, next with teachers in the relevant years, and then with all the staff. This gives teachers accurate, objective, data which they use to check the progress of all their students, to see whether the extensive program of support requires any adjustment for special education students, those who need extra help to keep up with their targets, and those needing help with English language.

In addition, the school tests students monthly and regularly gives practice tests. This provides an accurate, detailed view of each student's development. It allows teachers to decide whether a student is following the right course from the wide range of programs available, and whether extra assistance is needed. Regular, detailed reports from class and support teachers keep the principal and assistant principals very well informed about the progress of all their students. The administration also usefully compares the school's

results in State and City tests with the achievement of other district elementary schools to check for any areas of strength and weakness.

The school is very good at informing parents about the levels their children need to reach and how to help them do so. It shares data with them readily, and presses them to come to evening and weekend events where the curriculum and tests are discussed.

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 principal and assistant principals ensure that all teachers are aware of how performance levels are defined and the scale scores for each level. They encourage teachers to identify students who need help to reach the minimum score for the next grade.

Teachers are constantly looking at students’ data - their own tests, City and State tests, assessment results of the courses their students are following - to check their progress. They consult with senior staff regularly about the resources their students need to move on. Individualized programs are successfully developed to support students at risk, whether it is those in danger of falling behind, or able students lacking motivation.

The school has well developed procedures for supporting the work of all students. All teachers are trained in academic intervention, and the whole school is therefore committed to the development of all its students. Some teachers are selected to be full-time support staff. The logs of all academic intervention school teachers are rigorously inspected by senior staff to check that students receive the right level of challenge and make the necessary progress. Similar procedures apply to teachers who support English language learners.

The school is good at arranging classes to reflect the aptitudes of its students. For example, generally higher achieving students are in the same class. A student who is achieving more in one main subject than another may be placed in a different class, but will be allocated special help to make the necessary progress. The school provides effective collaborative teaching classes, with general education students and those with particular learning needs. Evidence from teachers’ assessments suggests that special education students raise their achievement and that average students make progress as expected.

The school conveys high expectations to students and parents. This is done at regular parents’ meetings and by the energetic work of the parent coordinator. The many weekend and vacation sessions challenge parents and their children to take full advantage of the wide range of opportunities on offer.

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 well developed.

The curriculum is well designed. The required curriculum is provided, and staff choose from a good range of courses to give students maximum benefit. Selected courses have built-in assessment tasks linked to levels, so that teachers can tell rapidly whether students are making the necessary progress. Teachers closely study the data these courses provide.

On this evidence, the principal and his team have made priorities for development in particular areas of the curriculum. They have rightly identified that the science curriculum and instruction requires attention because of recent staffing problems. Work is needed to widen the curriculum and teaching programs and to raise standards further in English language arts and mathematics. Similar work is also needed in social sciences.

Achievement is already in line with City and State averages, but the school is keen to improve further. To do this, it plans to emphasize three areas. First is the further improvement of writing skills, to move students on faster, reach higher levels sooner and use their higher skills to better effect. Second is the further development of technology, particularly to help students reach these more demanding standards in writing. Third is the increase of pace and challenge in the early childhood program, to give students a quicker rate of learning and accustom them to a more rigorous school program.

The Comprehensive Education Plan contains extensive analysis of data and maps out clearly the steps the school will take to reach its goals. The plan is monitored at regular intervals in order to adjust the direction of resources to ensure maximum progress for students. The result is a school of happy, well behaved learners working on tasks that are well matched to their ability and making good progress. Staff know their students well. Students like their teachers and confirm there is always someone they can confide in if they wish. Attendance has been improving and is now at the average City level of 94%. The principal and his team have devised very good ways of rewarding classes and individuals for 100% attendance. They intend to make sure this rising trend is continued.

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 and senior colleagues are skilled in the selection of staff. They are clear about the qualities they are seeking, closely observe candidates teaching, and have made good appointments. The school is also well staffed with support and other staff. The parent coordinator is a great strength and has recruited a large number of parents for the Learning Leader program. These parents work very effectively in school. They are warm in their praise for their coordinator, the principal and staff, and the good progress the school has made in the principal's time there. The partnership of parents and school, encouraged by the coordinator's energy and enthusiasm, is one of the keys to its success and progress.

Teaching is of good quality, as both parents and students confirm. Teachers have good opportunities for professional development. The school has yet to identify specific professional learning opportunities for teachers in order to achieve the higher standards in science, social studies, technology, writing and the early childhood program that the school has targeted for improvement.

The principal and assistants spend time productively in classrooms. A primary source of information for them is their learning walks. These might be to check on the general quality of teaching, but are more often used to discover the strength of a particular aspect of education, such as the use of questioning, in order to disseminate the best practice throughout the school. The quality of teaching is regularly appraised, and good follow-up is provided.

Teamwork is very good. There are frequent, scheduled meetings at all levels. Data is knowledgeably discussed and decisions clearly and rapidly made. The principal sets the tone and is highly respected. He has already brought about some very positive changes and has the clear capacity to develop the school further. The school runs very smoothly. It is a happy, positive place and is free of unnecessary noise or disturbance.

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 school evaluates its services, achievement and progress very well through the Comprehensive Education Plan, regular teachers' meetings and the detailed analytical work of its assessment teams. The administration has a very clear understanding of what is working well and where improvement is most needed. It makes good use of all available resources to meet these ends. As a result, it is also able to make very good use of the large range of extra opportunities on offer.

These opportunities include: the services of the academic intervention service teachers, tutoring for students needing English language support, extra help to catch up or make the right amount of progress, and support from the school counselor. In addition to the curriculum, the school has access to a very flexible range of extra activities and partnerships. Community-based organizations play a major part in the school, giving welcome breadth to its cultural life. These community-based organizations provide workshops and other activities for teachers, parents and students. One of the most successful extra programs is in violin instruction. This is very popular and is attended by over 100 students.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Emma L. Johnson School (PS 241)	∅	✓	+
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