



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Park Place Community Middle School

Junior High School 266

**62 Park Place
Brooklyn
NY 11217**

Principal: Michele Robinson

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Reviewer: John Collings

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 school has approximately 230 students of which a very small number are English language learners. Currently, the school does not receive Title 1 funding. The number of special education students has recently increased from the historically very low figure.

The student population comprises of approximately 63% Black, 32% Hispanic, 2% White and 3% other ethnic groupings. In 2005, the percentage of students recently arrived in the country was 1.3%. This was significantly lower than the figures for similar and City schools. The countries of birth for these students were Bolivia, Guyana and Jamaica.

At 93%, the school's attendance rate was above the figure for other City schools and slightly above that for similar schools in 2005.

The school currently shares a building with a District 75 school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- This is a high performing school with high expectations of students and staff with a strong emphasis on academic attainment.
- Staff members are respectful, caring and know students well.
- There is strong collegiality amongst staff who act consistently in the best interests of students.
- There is good cross-curricular planning to enable knowledge, understanding and skills learned in one subject to be applied in another.
- This school uses data effectively to compare performance between students, grades and classes.
- There are systematic reviews of instruction to ensure teachers and students are well supported to attain goals.
- There is good professional development in place to support the school's commitment to differentiated teaching.
- The principle is well respected and has clear vision and identified goals for the future.
- Attendance is above City averages and behavior is good across the school

What the school needs to improve

- Review progress towards short and long-term goals more frequently and systematically
- Monitor the year on year performance of students to assess the rate of progress compared with prior attainment.
- Build on the cross-curricular planning already in place to further develop opportunities for students to apply and consolidate their learning
- Continue to develop the initiative to increase differentiated teaching so that teachers' expectations are more closely matched to students' prior attainment.
- Identify opportunities to create more space to enable the school to have a library and a dedicated science base.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Students perform well in this school. There is a caring and supportive climate where students are respected and helped to achieve well. The staff work well together, particularly in cross-curricular planning, to assist students in applying the knowledge, understanding and skills learned in one lesson within other subjects.

The school uses data effectively to monitor student performance and to compare classes, grades and subjects. The school is less clear whether students are making the best possible progress from one year to the next based on their prior attainment. There is a commitment to differentiated teaching. However, planning currently does not generally identify a range of expectations for groups of students with differing abilities within a lesson. The school is implementing good professional development to address this.

The principal is well respected and has a clear vision for the school. Although goals are explicit and well documented, they are not reviewed regularly enough in order to ensure appropriate modifications in the light of emerging data or circumstantial change.

This school is constrained by lack of space and thus has no central library or any dedicated science space.

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

This school uses externally and internally generated data effectively. It uses a range of internal measures to monitor ongoing student performance and uses this data to compare the performance of classes and grades to good effect. It does not, however, use data well to monitor progress towards goals.

The school has used data to identify that there is no significant difference in the performance of different ethnic groups within the school. There are a very small number of students who are English language learners and these pupils are monitored individually to ensure they make good progress. The school has had a significant increase in the number of special education students and this has enabled the appointment of a special needs teacher to monitor students' progress and address their identified needs effectively.

The school successfully monitors the progress of students performing at level 1 or 2 to ensure they are well supported to meet graduation expectations. The small number of others causing concern are monitored as individuals. The effective use of data to monitor the performance of individuals, classes, groups and grades, and the consequent modification of curriculum and teaching styles, has had a positive impact. It has resulted in the school performing significantly better than similar schools over time.

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.

Data is used by school leaders to set goals. One such goal is that no child should be at level 1 in any grade. The expected percentage of students at each grade level in each subject is also identified. These goals have objective criteria against which the school evaluates its success. Overall, however, the goals are not reviewed systematically or collaboratively enough during the year to allow modification in the light of additional data or changes in circumstance.

Individual students have targets of which they are aware, but targets or goals for each class are less well articulated. Students in the greatest need of improvement are clearly identified and very well supported through additional tuition during and after school as well as through ‘push-in’ support during the day. As a result they make good progress. This is a small school where students are known well to all staff and any student not performing as expected is supported promptly and effectively. Teachers also give freely of their time to support students who are in need.

The school has high expectations of its students with the vast majority reaching the school’s aim of achieving at least level 3 or above within their grade. There are regular meetings with parents with whom there are discussions to set realistic targets for their children.

Improving performance is central to the school’s climate. However, it is less clear as to whether students make better or less than expected progress based on their prior attainment. As a consequence, it is revising the use of data collected to enable it to measure students’ progress year on year.

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 school implements the mandated curriculum effectively but is flexible in its planning across a range of subjects. For example, there are discussions between staff in English language and social studies to enable the application and consolidation of common knowledge, understanding and skills across both subject areas. This is a relatively new initiative and early indications from the data suggest it is having a positive impact on performance. The school is planning an extension of the initiative in the new academic year.

Teachers are held accountable for improving their instruction through formal and informal classroom observations. The school places considerable emphasis upon improving teachers’ planning in order to provide appropriately differentiated instruction which meets students’ needs. As yet, the impact of professional development for this improvement is

inconsistent. However, early indications suggest that, where successful, this is having a positive impact on student performance.

The school has used its budget well to support the initiatives it has put in place to achieve its goals. With outside support, it has made a significant investment in the use of information technology to support student learning. The long-term aim is that all students and staff will have their own laptops, through which they will communicate with each other and share instructional materials. Early indications suggest this is having a positive impact on the engagement and performance of students in grade 6 where the initiative has been fully implemented.

The school takes account of data in making budgetary, staffing and scheduling decisions. The increased number of special education students has necessitated the school appointing a specialist teacher to support this group. The school has amended the schedule to enable paired classes and common planning time to allow for cross curricular planning so that ideas in one subject can be emphasized and developed in the other. This initiative was implemented to encourage students to be more actively engaged in their own learning and, thereby, improve performance. The strategy has had a positive impact on learning and is being implemented in other grades as funds become available.

Students feel very safe in the school and trust and respect the staff. They are well known, not only by their home-room teachers, but by all staff including the principal and assistant principal. Response to personal and academic needs is very thorough and supportive with the intention to ensure academic progress

Student attendance is a high priority in the school. There are good procedures and these result in attendance rates that are higher than the City averages.

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

The school seeks to ensure the appointment of high calibre staff who are committed to using data to inform their instruction and are sufficiently flexible to adopt information technology and work with other teachers in cross-curricular planning.

Professional development is targeted on the school's goals. There has been significant professional development to support teachers in the use of information technology in their classrooms. Nearly all classes have electronic whiteboards which teachers use effectively. This has had a significant impact on the engagement of students and improvement in their writing skills. The school is committed to using data to inform differentiated planning and instruction and this is being developed through demonstration lessons and inter-visitations which enable staff to support each other. The principal and assistant principal make frequent visits to classrooms giving both verbal and written feedback. Teachers find this helpful and supportive.

Teachers plan in teams to develop cross-curricular themes in order to improve instruction through the application and extension of ideas and skills across different subjects. The review of this approach takes place within instructional teams under the guidance of the principal, assistant principal and the English coach. This approach is having an impact upon the development of students' knowledge, understanding and skills.

The principal is highly respected. She has a clear vision for the school and faculty responds well to her professionalism and her focus upon improving student performance. They appreciate the development of resources to support initiatives within the school. The school runs very smoothly and staff and pupils are clear about procedures and feel well informed.

The school involves an appropriate range of support services. It has support from the 'iteach-ilearn' initiative, which has assisted with the provision of computers within classrooms and 'Project Arts' which is developing students' English skills through the use of animation. It provides Saturday programs in conjunction with universities to support higher attaining students who often take grade nine Regents examinations in grade 8. It also has after school and Saturday tuition for students needing extra support. There are a significant number of after-school activities including arts, sports and dance.

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 has clear plans and objectives that are set out in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Separate documentation develops the contribution of each subject towards the goals. However, this connection is not always as explicit as it could be. There are, nonetheless, clear aims and strategies for implementation and objective measures to enable the school to monitor its progress towards goals. While the school does review its plans, it does not employ clear timelines to ensure that appropriate revisions, driven by emerging data or circumstantial change, are achieved in a timely fashion.

Data is used effectively to monitor student performance but the school is less effective in identifying whether students are making at least expected progress when compared with prior performance. However, the school has used data effectively to judge whether initiatives introduced are having a positive effect upon improving instruction and student performance.

The school uses periodic assessments and comparisons between classes and grades to review its plans. For example, one of the school's goals is to make greater use of information technology. The current grade 7 students use laptops for a significant proportion of their instruction and this has had an impact upon student engagement leading to better performance. As a result the school is planning to introduce similar initiatives to grades 6 and 8.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Park Place Community Middle School (JHS 266)	∅	✓	+
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	