



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Dr Bailey K Ashford School

Public School 287

**50 Navy Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Michele Rawlins

Dates of review: March 22 - 23, 2007

Reviewer: Catherine Powis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Dr Bailey K Ashford School has 199 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. From 2003 to the present day, enrollment has dropped from 337. The principal has only been at the school since September, 2006.

The school is eligible for Title 1 funding. In addition, the percent of days students attended in 2005 is 91.0% as compared to 91.5% in similar schools.

The student population is diverse but has a much higher proportion of Black students (71%) than typically found in City schools. The rest of the student population comprises 23% Hispanic with smaller proportions of Asian (3%) and White (3%) students. Presently the English Language Learners (2.9%) and the special education students (9.8%) are at lower proportions when compared to similar and City schools.

The school shares the building with a high school. Both schools co-exist collaboratively with programs that enable the older students to interact academically with the younger ones.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is very clear about the aspirations for the school's continued improvement.
- The school promotes effective partnerships and collaborations with outside agencies and community based organizations to support the school towards reaching its goals.
- The instructional cabinet has collected a suitable range of student performance data to help drive the school's work.
- The school's art program enriches student learning.
- A range of programs effectively develops students' social skills so that students behave well.
- The small staff team knows each other well and has a shared commitment to give students a good start to their education.
- Parents play a growing role in supporting their children's learning.
- The instructional team values professional development as a means to improve instruction.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop professional development for teachers' use of data so that they differentiate instruction more effectively and identify the 'how and why' when planning learning.
- Develop a more systematic approach for tracking the progress of each student by groupings, class, grade and subjects.
- Use data from the tracking system to revise and align programs throughout the year.
- Establish the systematic use of conference logs to identify students' next learning steps in reading, writing, and mathematics and informs teachers how to best group their students.
- Ensure that goal setting is a fully collaborative process and more precisely linked to areas in need of improvement as identified by the data.
- Use concrete data when making decisions about goals and programs for student progress.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The new principal who arrived in September, 2006 leads the school with energy and commitment and believes that all children can and should learn. Parents, staff, and students talk about the good feelings they have about the school, and how some things have improved over the short time that the principal has been there. The parents support the new principal and as a result parent involvement is on the rise. Parent volunteers are becoming a stronger presence in the building this year.

An organized learning environment exists where teachers are dedicated, and students are able to learn. The principal and staff are strongly committed to the social and moral development of each child in the building as well as their academic success. The building displays many fine examples of students' work on bulletin boards, as well as student artwork to create a bright and inviting atmosphere.

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 principal and the literacy coach collect a wide range of standardized assessment data about student performance and progress. Bar graphs and pie graphs present the data clearly and so facilitate the school's ability to share the information with staff at regular faculty conferences, grade meetings and professional development sessions. The school has collated a manageable system to gather essential data for each student. It is presented in a format that enables the school to identify patterns in the performance and progress of individual students and of different groups across the school. It uses the data well to make comparisons to its own past performance and to that of similar schools to gain a secure understanding of each student's knowledge and skills.

The State exam results are accessed to provide information on the relative performance of general education students, English language learners and special education students. The principal generates specific school data that informs the progress of children under foster care, and also children that are living in temporary housing. Teachers know students' test outcomes and plan small group work around these outcomes. However, the school is not yet analyzing data by ethnicity and gender to ascertain whether these groupings can make better progress.

Teachers collate data through detailed assessment binders that include conference logs and information from item skill analyses in reading and mathematics. This information is helping teachers to focus more on students' needs rather than on simply teaching the subject. The principal has a clear understanding of what is needed to become well developed in this area. She has been in the school for such a short time that there has not been enough time to bring about consistency in all classes but positive impact is evident.

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 has planned goals and objectives for the school with benchmarks for progress and measurable outcomes for English language arts and mathematics. In addition goals focus on incorporating literacy and social studies into art instruction that are anchored in an analysis of a wide variety of data. Specific attention is given to goal setting for increased performance and progress of the English language learners, special education students, and all those students close to moving up a level.

The goals and objectives, although evident and introduced, are developed as a collaborative process with some but not all stakeholders. The school leadership team with representatives from all sections of the school community creates a Comprehensive Education Plan that reflects the input of all stakeholders. A copy of the Comprehensive Education Plan that drives the goals and objectives is available for reference in the teachers’ lounge. The principal is planning a more collaborative process to engage all stakeholders to ‘buy in’ for the school as a whole, and focus on all grades, classrooms, students, subjects and support teams. Work is continuing to establish systems consistently across the school to ensure all teachers know how data can be used to set long-term targets and interim goals for individuals and groups of students. All staff are committed to ensuring that goals are challenging and focused on helping students to improve their achievements. The goal is to create an academic plan for each individual student.

High expectations for the students are shared by all staff and are conveyed and supported by parents. In turn, parents and caregivers express their appreciation for being able to speak with a teacher, being informed about the progress of their children, and the added value of the principal herself calling home when there is a concern.

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’s selected English language arts and mathematics curricula are well aligned to the State assessments and to the State standards. The Teachers College pacing calendars and professional guides that are implemented are standards-based and generate interim data on progress of individual students in class. Interim data is collected and recorded through conference and guided reading group logs and used by most teachers to plan suitable mini lessons and independent, cross-curricular thematic projects that interest students.

A focused plan to improve student outcomes is established. There are structures in place for teachers to be held accountable to examine their curriculum, instruction, and assessments. For example, regular grade studies and faculty conferences are built into the school schedule. The instructional cabinet works hand in hand with teachers through collegial conversations and observations. They build upon the existing classroom practice,

to create an explicit plan to reach their goal of consistently engaging, not just most, but all students by differentiating and modifying instruction in all classrooms. Teachers use data to plan practice tasks through online exercises to target the specific needs of each student.

Budgeting decisions, including staffing and scheduling are driven by the needs that the principal identifies through data. After school programs that offer not only Kaplan test sophistication practice but also enrichment classes are provided. The principal is building the classroom libraries to provide appropriate books for the ability and interest levels of all students, including for boys and girls and ethnic groups. The principal schedules staff well to meet the needs of students. She effectively schedules support, like English language learner pull-out during the school day, and collaborates with community-based organizations to effectively supplement the school's work.

Students are actively engaged in most classrooms. They can articulate what they are learning and how they learn. They understand how to navigate their classroom, choosing just-right books, referring to how-to charts, and accessing instructional materials. Students share portfolio pieces of their work that document their growth and progress. The principal has identified that the time spent on transitioning to and from different workshop components decreases time on task for students and so has made it a topic for improvement during professional development discussions. Students from all grades express how safe they feel in school. They are confident to go to a staff member when they need help, whether academic or personal. The Children Are Reason Enough (CARE) team is established to discuss and respond to student needs, one by one. The care and respect for the behavioural needs of students that affect their academic performance are evident. Conversations focus on using data to check student progress in addition to observations.

Attendance is a school priority. Parents have expressed satisfaction in knowing that the school will call home when their child is late or absent. Workshops, letters, and phone calls to parents are established. The school celebrates good attendance, such as class contests and pizza parties for the 90% attendance and above. The guidance counsellor and parent coordinator are working to reach out into the community and homes to educate parents on how student attendance impacts on student performance.

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 principal is very deliberate when hiring new teachers to ensure that they have the potential to build their skills to support the continued development of the school, and commitment to use data to increase student performance. A schedule for differentiated professional development is in process through weekly grade meetings which are always attended by the principal and coach. This structure has introduced a systematic approach that allows faculty to examine, plan, revise and evaluate classroom practice together. The principal has plans to further develop this structure to include more training on the use of data to align the curriculum and instruction and so to ensure even more effective learning. Teachers who attend off-site professional development are expected to share what they have learned with other staff on their return. The principal and literacy coach work closely with teachers to further develop instructional practice. Grade level teachers and the instructional cabinet meet weekly to hone skills in lesson components, such as the use of read and think alouds to develop the comprehension strategies of their students.

Conversations are open and honest and focus on how to bring about further improvement to instructional practice. The principal and coach visit classrooms regularly to monitor the effectiveness of classroom practice on learning. Inter-visitations and assessment binders enable teachers to examine more purposeful ways to use data to meet each and every individual student's needs.

The principal has a clear vision for the continued development of the school. She is visible in and around the school, and is an integral part of assemblies, meetings, and teams. She has the respect of the school community and the capacity to effect change. Parents are pleased with her openness and caring attitude for their children. The organization of the day to day operation of the school ensures that things run smoothly. The school has well-established relationships with a wide range of external partners and community-based organizations. These organizations offer programs that support and supplement student counseling, civics and citizenship, arts integration, athletics, literacy tutoring, and homework that help the school reach its goals. The tutoring program where the high school students tutor the elementary school students in reading has forged a strong partnership with the school that shares the building.

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 appropriate groups and committees with responsibility for evaluating progress toward achieving its targets and so is successfully building more collaboration through monitoring progress towards its goals. The senior leadership team works collaboratively to align the Comprehensive Education Plan with identified goals and to evaluate the school's progress toward these. There are some measurable interim benchmarks that provide a framework for monitoring and evaluating these goals. Teachers and support staff communicate on a regular basis to monitor the needs of students and reassess and revise the goals and realign programs and planned interventions. Professional development plans that support the goals and objectives in the classroom are modified throughout the year following an ongoing analysis of student progress in reading, writing, and mathematics. In addition, grade curriculum maps are realigned based on student needs, as determined by data such as item skill analyses.

Teachers examine the information generated by interim assessments, such as the Princeton Review, to monitor progress during the year. However, structures for teachers to monitor student progress regularly over a longer time, and develop a wider range of classroom strategies to follow up on student needs more routinely and consistently across grades and classrooms are not consistently in place. Work remains to ensure that the school can pull together all the data and monitoring and evaluating mechanisms into a systematic and school wide structure to build on its successes year on year.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

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| SCHOOL NAME: The Dr. Bailey K. Ashford School (PS 287) | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| Quality Score | | X | |

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| 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.

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| 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 | |

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| 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 knows and respect students and responds 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 | |