



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Dr Peter Ray

**Public School 305
344 Monroe Street
Brooklyn
NY 11216**

Principal: Dr Julia Mortley

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Reviewer: Corinne Rello-Anselmi

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Part 1: The School Context

The Dr Peter Ray Elementary School is a pre-kindergarten through grade 5 school with a total enrollment of 458 students. Nearly all the students are Black (87.33%) with 9.83% Hispanic and the remainder White and Asian. The school shares the building space with a middle school. It is Title I eligible. The proportion of special education students is 11% which is about the same as similar and other City schools. At 1.4% the proportion of English language learners is smaller than the average. The attendance rate (88.8%) is below average when compared to similar and City schools. The principal, assistant principal and literacy coach are all new to their roles.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal knows the community, students and staff well and is respected by all.
- The principal, assistant principal and coaches are clear about what needs to be done to effect positive change for improvement.
- The climate of the school is calm, safe, and orderly.
- There is a renewed sense of commitment among teachers to further develop the use of data to inform instruction.
- Partnerships with local youth development provide varied and interesting activities.
- Students show good effort to comply with school rules and behave well in class.
- The character education program emphasizes responsibility, caring, fairness, and respect for others.
- The school communicates well with parents and is valued by the community.
- The principal has made a sound start in setting up systems to review the work of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Use data in a more focused way to identify trends in student progress over time for individuals and groups of students whose achievement is identified as in need of improvement.
- Use the data to set and communicate measurable short and long term goals for academic achievement, and measure their attainment through rigorous monitoring and evaluation practices.
- Strengthen the use of data to differentiate instruction to meet the full range of student abilities in English language arts and mathematics.
- Monitor the impact of additional interventions more systematically to ensure effectiveness.
- Tighten up procedures for monitoring absences, and initiate additional student incentives in order to improve attendance and lateness.
- Focus instructional planning on the learning process and its outcomes.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school.

In the short time since the appointment of the principal and assistant principal, there is a growing understanding for the school to analyze its performance and to plan for improvement. There is a clear commitment among the teachers to further develop the use of data. The school evaluated itself as proficient. The review disagrees with this and there remain significant areas of the school's work that are undeveloped. Systems are still so new they have not started to make the impact required on students' achievement. This is particularly so in the teachers' use of the data to differentiate instruction to fully meet the needs of all children, and in the school's monitoring of students' progress.

The administration, staff and parents work closely together to provide a safe, clean and orderly learning environment for the children. Character education is embedded in all of the work with the students. The school motto, "It takes a village to raise a child", is evident in the strong sense of community at the school.

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 undeveloped.

The administration is fully aware of the poor past performance in English language arts, mathematics and science when compared to similar and City schools, and has been working hard to improve the instructional model. The school's systems for gathering data are slowly developing although full use has yet to be made of the information. Important aspects for improvement, particularly in English language arts and mathematics have now been identified and so the school has a growing knowledge and understanding of the school's performance in these subjects. Comparisons of student performance across grades and classes have begun to identify patterns of achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by individuals and groupings of students, including special education students, English language learners, boys and girls, and students who struggle to reach the grade standards and have been held over. The schools' new database is beginning to enable school to disaggregate data more quickly by class, grade, ability, gender, and subject but not yet by ethnic grouping.

The school has begun to gather their own data and identify trends in student progress in classes through end of unit assessments, item analysis, portfolios of student work, conferencing notes and running records. However, few formal school systems of methodically analyzing and recording the progress over time of individual students have been developed because the process is so new. Data for science and social studies has not yet been analyzed in enough detail to identify trends in performance and progress and so the school's knowledge of what students know and are able to do in these subjects is not secure.

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 undeveloped.

The principal and the assistant principal have shared their high expectations for student achievement, and are aware of those areas in which improvement is required. As a result, a renewed commitment to ensuring improvements in student performance and progress drives the work of all members of the school community is evident. The school's has started to use assessment information to assist in its planning and in setting some goals for student achievement. For example, in September, the school identified a weakness in reading and so set clear measurable goals for each grade to improve achievement in this aspect by the end of the year. However, due to time constraints, this good practice has yet to be extended in the same level of detail to other subjects and aspects of the school's work still in need of improvement. To meet the goal of character development the school has introduced a character education program which emphasizes key values such as fairness and trustworthiness. As a result, the school is calm and positive relationships exist between most students and adults. Specific individualized plans for accomplishing other more general goals have been written but not yet implemented.

The school gives suitable attention to improving the performance and progress of students who need the most help to succeed. This is mainly achieved through teachers pushing in during general classes or small group pull out sessions with special support teachers and staff. Extended day sessions are beginning to make a difference to those students who attend regularly. However, the progress of these students is not checked rigorously enough and so the school does not always identify when individual students start to slip back or make sure that the targets identified in individual education plans are known and addressed by all teachers in classes.

Parents are pleased with the communication about their children’s progress, although as yet, discussions do not focus enough on goal setting and plans. The parent teacher association, with the support of the parent coordinator, is actively seeking additional ways to involve parents in the life of the school and to increase participation in their children’s education. Parent workshops and newsletter have been initiated and growing numbers of parents are attending. Workshops focus on how parents can help their children at home and so enables the school to share its high expectations with parents. Teachers effectively share expectations with students through the use of rubrics and sticky notes that highlight what students have achieved successfully and identify next steps in learning.

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 undeveloped.

The school follows the mandated curriculum which includes English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, and physical education. The workshop model for reading and writing instruction has been in place for the past four years. Additional classroom instructional supports in literacy for all students have been identified but not yet fully implemented. Generating meaningful interim data to support instruction and to differentiate instruction for each student as well as the achievement of school's

goals is uneven. For example, the goal of integrating guided reading in a meaningful way through the use of analyzed reading running records and level books is more successful in some classes than others. While item analysis is used to inform curriculum planning, too often students are still expected to do the same level of work in class, with support if they need help, even if they already know and are able to do what is planned. .

There is a renewed sense of commitment among teachers to further develop the use of data to inform instruction. The school has begun to provide teachers with the information that would aid them in targeting instruction according to students' needs but there are inconsistencies in way in which teachers plan and set work which challenges all students. For example, common planning time focuses on the content students will cover in a lesson and not on the planned learning. Members of the instructional leadership team do not join teachers often enough at these times to support the process effectively.

Budgeting, staffing and programming decisions are not yet made in response to data but plans are in place to do this as the school gains more control over its budget allocation and is able to respond to its data analysis more closely. The register loss this year resulted in a loss of funding requiring a review of the allocation of staff in order to ensure effective classroom and intervention support. Additional materials to support the school's goal of incorporating guided reading in the literacy block are still required.

Students are attentive and well behaved in class but student intellectual engagement is uneven because their thinking is not always challenged in class. This is especially true in higher achievers. Students report that they enjoy their work, particularly practical lessons such as science and art, and describe for the most part the positive and supportive relationships they have with teachers. They feel that their teachers want them to do well in school and they can go to them for help. The development of students' personal and social skills is a school priority.

Although the school has initiated monthly attendance awards and bimonthly assemblies, the attendance rate (88.8%) continues to be below that of similar schools and City schools. Student lateness is problematic with many students arriving late for school on a daily basis. There is no systematic whole school policy for monitoring attendance.

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 liked and respected by students, parents, and staff. She maintains an open door policy and has been influential in establishing a calm and orderly environment.

Professional development is aligned to the broad performance issues revealed by the State testing. The development of a deeper understanding of how data informs instructional planning has been initiated. A survey of staff in the fall as well as mid-year, assist in determining professional development needs. However, the teachers indicate the need for more differentiated professional development opportunities in order to share best practices. Teachers meet regularly to plan classes together but discussions do not focus enough on evaluating practice and which methods to use to more effectively improve learning for all students. The literacy and mathematics coaches do not join these meetings often enough to guide discussions and focus on learning outcomes.

The principal and assistant principal observe classes formally and informally regularly and use the information to inform further professional development and instructional improvement needs. She has plans to focus more rigorously and systematically on student performance and on making teachers more accountable for the outcomes of their students. The principal has clear procedures for recruiting personnel, based on data, and has successfully appointed teachers, coaches and an assistant principal who are supportive of her vision and who are starting to make a difference.

Academic intervention programs in literacy for level one and low level two students have been established although the monitoring of information about special education students is not rigorous enough. The school has partnerships with local youth development organizations such as the Police Athletic League and provides varied and interesting activities such as monthly character education celebrations, school post office and chorus.

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 undeveloped.

Since the recent appointment of the school's principal, there is evidence of the school's ability to analyze its performance and to begin planning for development. As a result, systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school have been introduced and are starting to drive improvement. The cabinet, which consists of the principal, assistant principal, literacy and mathematics coaches, meets regularly and is focused on the achievement of school goals because it is led by the principal. Achievement in reading is monitored against interim and long-term goals outlined in its action plans and challenging questions asked if these are not being met. Realignment of teaching methods, programs and interventions occur as a result of decisions made. This example of good practice is not yet extended to other aspects because goals are not so precisely measured in subjects other than reading.

The school as yet does not have systems for precise and consistent internal assessment of student progress to use as measures to monitor and evaluate all aspects of its work. Although there is an established academic intervention team, monitoring of the types or effectiveness of interventions given to students over time has not been fully developed. This has resulted in an inability to effectively realign practices and resources to maximize student achievement.

During June planning, the school evaluates how well the year has gone and identifies the following year's goals based on this review. Last year, the school used assessment data to identify areas for improvement, to set goals and write plans that supported its drive for improvement. Plans are in place to repeat the process this year, to involve representatives from all members of the school community and to make it a truly constant, consistent and cyclical process.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Dr. Peter Ray (PS 305)	∅	✓	+
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		