



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Dr Rose B. English School**

**Public School 327**

**111 Bristol Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11212**

**Principal: Dr Stephen Appea**

**Dates of review: May 14 - 15, 2007**

**Reviewer: Martyn Groucutt**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Dr Rose B. English School is situated in the Brownsville area of Brooklyn and currently has 736 enrolled students from pre-kindergarten through grade 7. In demographic terms 84% of its students are Black, 15% Hispanic and 1% other. There are 22 students (3%) currently identified as English language learners. The school is Title 1 funded. Of the total student number, 16% are special education students who have individual education plans. Attendance over the last year stands at a fraction below 91%, which is around the City average and a clear improvement over time.

The school is committed to being a partner in the urban regeneration of this part of the borough, seeing this as part of its core mission.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has a dynamic vision of a school that supports effective learning and is at the heart of its community.
- Faculty shows a real commitment to their students and to each other, creating a real learning environment.
- Extensive amounts of data are used to excellent effect in tracking cohorts, groups and individual students.
- Effective practice by the cabinet and coaches supports teachers in their classrooms and in their professional development.
- Data is used to create flexible student groupings in which individual needs can be targeted and strengths celebrated.
- The partnerships with outside bodies allow them to align their work with the school curriculum and so reinforce learning.
- The school buildings are a colorful celebration of effective learning, with student work displayed prominently.
- The open door policy builds positive links with parents and community.
- The provision of effective support and provision for special education students and at risk students maximizes their potential for learning.
- The whole school is driven by a desire to raise achievement year-on-year.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop professional development interviews for teachers to gree personal and student-centered goals with students.
- Develop classroom management systems based on the two-yearly looping for teachers and their classes, to promote better knowledge of individual students.
- Further development intervisitations and opportunities for teachers to observe best practice.
- Extend the use of the teacher needs survey to include recent developments in the teaching of science.
- Development links with the education department in a local institution of higher education to support the professional development of teachers.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

The school has gone through a transformation over the last four years and from being in the bottom quartile for the district in its overall results it is now performing as one of its top schools. This has coincided with the arrival of the current principal, who from the outset has stressed the importance of data-driven instruction. He has led from the front and developed a team of teachers who are committed to the school and its students, and who share the principal's vision of a school at the heart of its community.

A wide range of data is used to demonstrate progress from the initial baseline established in pre-kindergarten. Much of this data is displayed on classroom walls so that students can see the progress they have made and where they are currently, together with the display of clear rubrics that show how to move up to the next level.

The whole school is focused on improvement with an annual target of a 10% increase in results in every curriculum area year-on-year, and while this might not always be reached, it is a challenge to which faculty and administration aspire. This is also supported by the way that even the after programs from outside providers are data driven and complement the formal curriculum taught during the school day.

### 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.**

This is a data-rich school and a wide range of information on individual performance is maintained by teachers and on a central electronic database. Standardized tests are used throughout the school as the basis for groupings, each grade having a higher achieving class to which students are admitted on the basis of previous year's scores. Students take monthly diagnostic tests, which are used to ensure that they remain suitably placed as the year progresses.

The school is aware of the performance of its ethnic groupings and has, for example identified that its Hispanic students perform at a higher level than its Black students in mathematics and science and has sought to analyze the reasons for this. Similarly its special education population is tracked with great care and the support provided is of high quality allowing some students with high levels of physical and emotional difficulties to be maintained in general education settings. Other groups have been identified and their data analyzed to try to ensure that they suffer no disadvantage, for example the group of around 50 students who live in nearby housing projects on a temporary basis. The school also has specific data on the performance of the 140 students who attend from out of zone, the vast majority of them performing at or above grade expectation. Interestingly, the school has also identified progress by gender and found that girls outperform boys by a

considerable distance in mathematics and science, especially in the younger grades. They have hypothesized that this is because of excellent role models provided by female teachers in these subjects and taken this into account in planning.

Careful comparisons of the school's results with those of other schools throughout the district show that the school has made remarkable progress and is now one of the top performing schools.

**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 analysis of data underpins much of the activity of cabinet and faculty meetings. Hard data is used by teachers to complete goal-planning sheets and from this "realistic" and "ultimate" goals are set for all students. While the Comprehensive Education Plan sets a target of 10% improvement across all curriculum areas there is an appreciation that because of grouping by levels of ability some groups will find this easier than others to achieve and this is taken into account in analyzing progress. For example, at risk students have their own individual goals supported by academic intervention support staff. Goals and plans therefore focus on individual as well as whole school needs and this is supported by the detailed knowledge that teachers build up of their students over time, including the creation of portfolios. There is discussion as to whether this would be further strengthened if there were a looping of teachers with their classes over a two year period. Since this would coincide with the leadership roles of cabinet members the introduction of this would also strengthen the links between teachers and "their" cabinet representative.

Particular care is taken to support students in greatest need of improvement, for example, through the effective introduction of the Reading Rescue program. Support is also given to enable some individuals with challenging levels of special educational needs to be educated in general education placements.

High expectations are conveyed to students and their families, going alongside the clear commitment of teachers. Many give their cell phone numbers to students, for example, so that they can ring if help is needed with homework. In a community in which high educational achievement has not traditionally been the norm, this has been an important element of the school's work in raising standards. Increasing numbers of parents are becoming involved, supported by the open door policy and a range of activities planned to increase their involvement. This is helping to complete a picture of involvement by all stakeholders in the school.

**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 school takes care to ensure that its curriculum is fully aligned with City and State requirements and through the rigorous utilization of data teachers seek to guarantee that their instruction is supporting individual progress.

Teachers are held accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes, but in this they are given very good support by the cabinet and coaches. Lesson plans and resources are tied to specific instructional needs. It is the norm to see teachers grouping students based on achievement within their classes, sometimes being broken into smaller sub-groups. This ensures effective support in providing differentiated instruction, although the school's self-evaluation acknowledges it could sometimes do more to challenge its higher achieving academic students.

There are good examples of ways in which the budget has been driven by identified needs. A good example is the decision to drop the Wilson program when it was not producing good enough results, and most of the students who no longer received Wilson were given small group tutoring with an emphasis on phonemic awareness. Similarly teachers and paraprofessionals have been utilized very effectively in the desire to raise achievement, such as in the use of experienced teachers to support new colleagues, or in the movement of teachers to different grades so they can maximize their expertise. Data also underpins schedules and the use of student time for whole groups and in the provision of small group and individual support.

Students have risen to the greater level of academic demand placed on them and on the whole they are responding well to the increasing challenge inherent in their learning. The way in which the school building has been transformed through displays of high quality student artwork and by the carefully mounted displays of large amounts of student work has also helped through creating a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. This is also resulting in greater levels of attendance, though the school also has rigorous procedures for following up absence, including home visits after a third day with no contact.

**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 school's principal was once a class teacher at the school and he has maintained the respect he originally won from parents and colleagues in that role, although his performance in taking the school forward has enhanced this even more. He is widely recognized within and beyond the school as the primary catalyst for improvement. However, this has been a whole school effort and very good support from the cabinet and faculty, who show strong commitment to the school, are also important factors.

There is a good mix of experienced and new teachers and all are well supported by frequent informal observation.. New teachers get additional help through being paired with an experienced colleague and through regular support meetings. Individual, developmental action plans are worked out with all teachers, but these do not yet constitute a formal annual professional development interview in which agreed objectives and associated development needs could be agreed between teachers and administration. The school has given thought to how the development of its most experienced teachers might be stimulated such as through developing links with the education department of a local university. In this way teachers might have the opportunity to observe excellence in practice and master teachers might be able to undertake elements of action research relating to their practice. Similarly, teachers might gain from a greater development of intervisitations and opportunities to observe excellence elsewhere.

Team work and planning is a strong feature among teachers and there is a very high level of mutual support that sits alongside their commitment to the school as a whole. There is a sharing of data and in the drive to raise standards there is an openness in the sharing of all information that pertains to the school.

A very strong feature of the school is the strength of the after school provision which comes from a variety of providers. This includes, for example, programs to promote science and phonemic awareness, while support for undertaking homework is also available. These programs generate their own data and are strongly aligned with identified curriculum needs, so reinforcing the education provided during the rest of the day.

**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.**

Clear interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress are used effectively. Strand and performance indicator maps support this process in grades 3 through 7, providing a detailed performance analysis. There is a monthly building of action plans based on identified needs across the curriculum and grade specific pacing calendars provide guidance to teachers to support this. Data is used to identify gaps in student knowledge, since it drills down to individual strands and enables a clear picture to be built up of individual, group and cohort strengths and areas for development.

This process also supports the ability to compare the progress of students within and across classrooms and over time. It enables the progress made towards meeting goals to be seen and measured. Where necessary it allows such goals to be amended in the light of the emerging picture as the year goes on. It also supports the flexible placing within groups or classes over time.

Careful planning and monitoring of outcomes drives successive phases of goal setting, enabling the school to set challenging, yet realistic targets and to raise the bar for achievement on a year-by-year basis. At the same time, it supports the realignment of practice and resources, such as in the decision to drop the provision of the Wilson program referred to above. At the heart of everything that the school does is the desire to raise student outcomes and to support students in maximizing their full potential.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Dr Rose B English School (PS 327)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X