



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**School of Integrated Learning
Middle School 354**

**1224 Park Place
Brooklyn
NY 11213**

Principal: Monique Campbell

Dates of review: October 5 - 6, 2006

Reviewer: Martyn Groucutt

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 is a new middle school established in September 2005 in a building that it shares with three other schools. It currently has students in grades 6 and 7, and will reach its full capacity next year. There are 197 students enrolled.

Around 93% of the students are Black, with a further 5% Hispanic and the school is Title 1 eligible. There are 36 special education students and a further 10 are English language learners. Attendance is currently running at below 90%, which is a lower than other schools in the City.

Last year the school was hampered because it opened with only half the expected number of students. Registration to the school was ongoing, which worked against continuity and progression in learning and the curriculum. It also hindered some students' understanding of classroom expectations and the ethos of the school. A sizeable number of the students were admitted on appeal against retention in their previous schools. This year student enrolment is more settled and planning for the school year is therefore on a stronger footing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides clear vision and effective leadership, well supported by her cabinet.
- Staff collaborate effectively, forming a mutually supportive team.
- The maintenance of portfolios of individual students' work provides hard evidence of progress.
- Teachers are held accountable for the progress of students in their classes.
- Many students enjoy school, forming positive relationships with the principal and staff.
- The schedule of visits to places of social, cultural and scientific interest around New York gives students an opportunity to see beyond their immediate neighborhood.
- During its first year, the school has made use of a range of strategies to gain and implement information from all available data.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop the use of technology across the whole curriculum as a tool for teaching and learning.
- Improve the use of differentiated instruction as a way of meeting individual student's needs and learning styles.
- Seek to strengthen academic intervention by appointing of a literacy coach as soon as resources permit.
- Improve attendance and punctuality.
- Develop further contacts with parents and the local community.
- Introduce positive images of successful contemporary Black Americans, both visually and in written materials, as a source of motivation for students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school got off to a difficult start in September 2005, when far fewer students than expected actually enrolled, leading to higher staffing and operational costs than could be easily accommodated within the budget. Many students were not achieving well, and had been enrolled only after appeals against retention in their previous schools, or only after passing the required tests during the summer prior to starting. Numbers continued to grow during the year, often made up of students whose families had not chosen to attend the school and with little knowledge or understanding of the school's vision.

However, the principal and her staff persevered and in this second year the school is in a stronger position. In its first year the school worked hard to create a clear vision for its staff based around the importance of collaboration to secure the implementation of integrated learning. It is a testimony to all staff that the spirit of collaboration and integrated learning remains intact. They are now in a position to move forward in a more constructive way in which the school's ideals can become reality.

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.

When the school opened in September 2005, it had very little data by which to analyze the performance of its students beyond the grade 5 Grow Reports. The immediate task was to set about generating interim data against which students' progress could be measured as the year went on. Curriculum was developed with assessments that gave regular interim scores at the end of units and staff met together regularly as part of their commitment to integrated learning to look at individual progress.

There was also a need to implement effective interventions for the numbers of special education students whose problems lay in the area of emotional and behavioral difficulties. This was done through the establishment of a special education group of 12 students, with a teacher and a paraprofessional.

When the first results from the State tests in English language arts were received recently, they were analyzed in detail. They showed an improvement in the numbers of students scoring at levels 3 and 4, but also showed some students making little or no progress. This issue is being addressed with vigor, with a detailed analysis that will seek to address this lack of progress so that it does not become an established pattern. However, the impact of the difficult start faced by the school cannot be ignored, with considerable numbers of underachieving and unwilling students being admitted. As the school becomes established and settled it will be in a position to use its increasing amounts of data, and the portfolios of work being developed for all students, to establish solid baselines at the start

of the year against which progress can be measured and areas of weakness identified for all individuals.

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.

Teamwork is a strength of the school. This is a tribute to the efforts of the principal, who has brought vision and purpose, and to the staff, who show effective collaboration and mutual support in planning and sharing together. Practical difficulties, such as having to admit students throughout much of the last school year, meant that some of the ideals, such as developing critical thinking and problem-solving across the curriculum, did not become as advanced as had been hoped. However, increased stability as the school grows towards its capacity next year should enable it to focus on such issues. The school recognizes that the budget restrictions are responsible for the lack of a literacy coach to work alongside the effective mathematics coach and plan to address this weakness as soon as the budget allows.

The development of individual portfolios of students’ work has been a positive move. This has begun to create clear evidence of students’ progress that teachers can share in their common planning and curriculum development discussions. This supplements the evidence gained throughout the year from teachers’ running records and interim assessments.

Since many parents did not make a positive choice to send their children to the school there is a clear need to develop closer and more effective links with some homes. Lateness and attendance are issues that, despite the best efforts of the school, are holding back the progress of some students. Similarly, links with the local community are not fully developed, not only for seeking practical support, but also for using successful local Black Americans to demonstrate to students the benefits of a successful education from within their community. There is also a lack of images of successful contemporary Black Americans around the school to act as role models for the students.

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 identified a potential problem in finding qualified staff who not only have the necessary skills in the classroom, but who also share the school’s ideals of integrated learning. These ideals include developing techniques such as writing across the curriculum, integrating technology into all content area and developing critical thinking and problem solving skills. However, there is a cohesive team who show commitment to developing instructional activity and resources in planning for accelerated learning. While evidence from this year’s State tests shows that this has not happened in the short time the school has been open, there is a real commitment to find out why and to set things right for the future.

At the same time, the success in raising the numbers achieving levels 3 and 4 can be celebrated. Interim data has been used as a basis for identifying students in need of additional support and been used to select participants for the extended day and Saturday school provision.

Some students display challenging behavior and this remains an issue for the school. However, many enjoy coming to school and certainly appreciate the efforts that the teachers make on their behalf. There is a clear pattern of higher expectation and self-esteem emerging in students coming from a community where academic success has not always been the norm.

One area for development, so that reality can better match expectation, is in the use of technology across the curriculum. This powerful tool for developing individual research, or for supporting the less able academically through programs to reinforce their learning, is currently under-used. While there is some use of technology, teachers' confidence in its use and understanding of its potential have yet to be developed so that it becomes a strong and consistently utilized aspect of the curriculum.

Instructional materials have been chosen with care, such as the curricula used for teaching English language arts and mathematics. These closely mirror the test requirements and are broken down into units giving opportunities for testing and learning, and are proving an invaluable source of interim data. The program of visits made to places of social, cultural and scientific interest around the City, extending the boundaries and awareness of many students, is a positive aspect of school life.

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.

Developing effective capacity for accelerating individual learning and achievement was a major issue for the school from the outset. Many of those students performing at levels 3 and 4 who had been expected to enroll simply did not materialize when the school opened. This left the school with a disproportionate number of students who had failed to find success elsewhere, some with emotional and behavioral issues.

There is cohesion among staff and a commitment to improving outcomes. Staff have shown a good commitment to raising individual achievement. However, work remains to be done in increasing the amount of differentiated instruction that will help every student to maximize their potential. Additional academic intervention capacity is also needed. Staff would appreciate more opportunities to learn from others, such as inter-visitations between classes and the chance to observe effective teaching elsewhere, perhaps in one of the other schools on the same campus.

The principal supports effective professional development and is committed to meeting identified training needs. The student counselor is also supporting individual students with difficulties in order to maximize their potential for accelerating learning. This approach of developing teachers' expertise and increasing student commitment provides a good basis for supporting individual learning.

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.

This is a school now in its second year that is showing a real commitment to meeting the challenges it faces and to raising individual student outcomes. Teachers are happy to accept responsibility for the performance of their classes and to learn from experience and from opportunities for professional development in an atmosphere characterized by teamwork and mutual support. Despite difficulties caused by a lack of hard data when the school was first established, it has set out to gather effective interim data about student outcomes, and to illustrate levels of students' achievement in a practical way through the creation of individual portfolios. As the results from State tests are received the school will strengthen its data base.

There is evidence that intervention based on individual need is being implemented, although the need remains to further develop differentiation within classroom teaching. Opportunities for individual support in the extended day and Saturday school are being developed. While the behavior of some students remains an issue, the leadership of the school is supporting teachers by addressing this issue and maintaining the vision of a learning community. Teachers hold the principal in high regard and appreciate the support they get from her. Many students enjoy coming to school – one described it as 'awesome' - and they appreciate the efforts that teachers make on their behalf. There is good potential here for moving this school forward in making a real difference to the lives of its young people.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The School for Integrated Learning (MS354)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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	