

The Brooklyn School For Global Studies

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Brooklyn
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Part 1: Overview

What the school does well

- The Principal has a strong vision. Many procedures are well routinised. There is a strong philosophy, which guides the work of the school. Students develop into independent, thinking young people.
- Leaders have high expectations, such as of the quality of work expected from students. Decisions are shared; departments follow a common agenda in discussions and adopt a collegiate approach to decision making. The capacity to improve is good.
- Leadership empowers students and staff; all are part of the educative process. The school's process of self-evaluation has led to a broadly accurate picture of the school, though at times, the school is too critical of itself.
- The school responds to its accurate self-evaluations positively.
- The school's approach/strategies to/for improving students' literacy skills is developing students' capacity to learn in all subjects.
- The curriculum interests students and there is a good emphasis on improving the quality of students' work.
- Students are mature, well engaged in their work and understand how doing well at school will help them in future. They are socially responsible and raise funds for good causes. They are advised well by adults in the school.
- Vulnerable students are effectively supported and make good gains.
- The progress that students make in history, geography and government is good.
- Students have a good knowledge of their strengths and areas for development.
- Teachers keep a close check on students' individual progress. There is a helpful emphasis on college preparation, good presentation of work and in the use of information technology.
- Displays of students' work set a good tone in school and give students a clear idea of the standards to strive for. On occasions, the work is displayed with completed assessment criteria, so that students know what is particularly good.
- Aspects of teaching are well developed. Teachers show considerable expertise and they make lessons interesting. Teachers have a good knowledge of students' progress. They have a presence in their classes, develop students' thinking capacity and engage them in lessons.
- Students' have positive views of the school. Students' views are valued, for example, in the town hall discussions.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO IMPROVE

- Develop the consistent use of differentiated instruction to accelerate the progress of all students.
- Continue to raise standards and improve students' progress in English language arts, mathematics and science.
- Develop further the use of data to support students even more effectively. Collect all sources of data together into a form that gives a coherent picture of students' progress, so that any further patterns in students' work can be seen and interventions planned.
- Bring together the good practice, such as about the 'habits of mind' and make

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them school wide.

- Develop ways to ensure that non-examined work is calibrated with other schools, so that expectations and standards are more consistent.
- Develop the mini programs to include more subjects students are interested in.
- Develop the extra time program so that students see the benefits more clearly and make greater use of this good opportunity to improve their progress.

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Part 2: The School Context

Information about the school

This is a small school for approximately 625 students in grades 6th to 12th, which has been in existence for 11 years. The school is part of the New Visions for Public Schools initiative. The school concentrates on literacy, humanities and college preparation. The school's mission is, "Understanding Ourselves, the World and How to Make Change."

Class sizes typically are around 20 students. Students come from Brooklyn. Students' standards on entry into 6th grade overall are below average. The school screens a proportion of its new students on the basis that they want to come to the school. A significant proportion of students are identified as having a special educational need, or to have English as a second language that requires additional support. Students typically have Black and Hispanic backgrounds. The school shares the building with one other school.

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Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

This is an improving school. The principal and staff work effectively and the priorities for change they have identified are the right ones. The school uses data proficiently to accelerate students' progress.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria.

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.

This area is proficient.

Analysis of the school's examination and test data shows that its effectiveness is proficient overall. It is showing satisfactory value added. The school graded students' achievement as undeveloped in its self-evaluation form, which is too harsh a judgment. In discussion with the school about students' progress this year, their work in English language arts and mathematics is overall close to but a little below the school's benchmarks. The Annual School Report for 2004-2005 indicated that improvements were required for middle level mathematics and in secondary level English language arts.

The school has accurate data about its performance. Teachers have looked closely at the performance of groups. The main reason for students not yet reaching the benchmarks is that a significant proportion of them enter the school with a literacy deficit. The school is working proficiently to raise standards and accelerate students' progress in English Language Arts, mathematics and science through changes to the curriculum and by emphasizing literacy skills, which allow students to learn better in all subjects.

The school emphasizes work in the humanities, so in these subjects students' progress is better. The Annual School Report for 2004-2005 indicated that students' achievement in global history and geography and U.S history and government has been slightly better than in similar schools for the last two years.

The school uses data proficiently to identify strengths and weaknesses in subjects. Since the Principal joined the school two years ago, students' progress has been measured using comparisons with similar schools and the school's own past performance in academic subjects.

The school monitors students' progress and performance proficiently, for example, through tests and other assignments. There is regular calibration of how well students are doing which provides teachers with data about students' performance and which allows teachers to give students helpful feed back. They know clearly what is expected of them and how to improve.

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Students with English as a second language or who are special education students are well supported and make good progress. The school works effectively with these groups because it identifies their needs and meets them. Their better progress has been recognized as some of the best in the City.

Students complete 'Roundtables' which are calibrated within the school only. Teachers do not know precisely how high the standards of work in these are compared with other schools. The school needs to validate this work so that expectations and standards are consistent and give a truer picture of students' performances.

The school has identified the need to develop further the means of gathering data to support students more effectively. The school keeps information in various forms that are not always compatible. A system is needed that gives an entirely coherent picture of students' progress, so that any further patterns in students' work can be seen and interventions planned.

Quality Statement 2: 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 is proficient.

Teachers work together proficiently to set goals and yearly targets for subjects. The school rightly wishes to improve students' writing and reading skills further. Teachers have identified this target as being the one most likely to accelerate students' progress further in all subjects. Data shows that this is the main area where students tend to struggle, which affects work in all other subjects.

Staff knows there is a long journey ahead, and there is no complacency. The initial main goal is for results to reach benchmarks this year and for students to make average yearly progress. In further response to the school's self-evaluation, improvements in what the school offers students in science and in mathematics are also high on the agenda.

The process of setting academic goals begins with baseline tests given to grade 6 students soon after joining the school. Teachers have noticed that young students in grade 6 do not respond well to the frequent changes of class for each subject; they are unsettled and tend to make less progress than expected. In response to this need, fewer teachers will teach grade 6 next year.

Teachers know their advisory group of students well. Teachers use time in these sessions to advise and encourage individual students. Students are very clear about what they need to do to graduate. The school also uses this knowledge of students well to identify those at risk. The school has a good process for identifying students most in need of improvement. Assignment grades, behavior records, exclusions and test scores are used as indicators of whether this group of students is well engaged in their work or not.

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Parents are regularly invited to hear about their children's academic and social progress. This contact helps to accelerate students' progress because coordinated checks are being made to ensure students do what is needed.

Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area is proficient.

The school is realizing its mission. Much has been done in the last two years to ensure that teaching and learning, the curriculum and the use of money have had a positive effect on students' progress. The school has realized its high expectations in two areas: students' work is often neat and well presented and computers are used well to help students present their work and organize their ideas coherently.

The curriculum interests students. Displays of students' work set a good tone in school and give all students a clear idea of the standards to strive for. On occasions, the work is displayed with completed assessment notes, so that students know what teachers thought was particularly good about it. This encourages all to try harder.

There are two areas where the school needs to improve. In discussion with students, they requested more mini programs during and after the school day in subjects that they are interested in. Some students do not yet see the benefits of the extra time program clearly and do not make use of this good opportunity to improve their work and accelerate their progress.

The Principal has carried out a helpful program of teaching observations. Teachers receive feedback and have opportunities to improve how they teach as a result. The school has accurately identified the need for the more consistent use of differentiated activities in lessons for students to accelerate their progress.

Aspects of teaching are well developed. Teachers show considerable expertise and they make lessons interesting. Teachers have a good knowledge of students' progress. They have a presence in their classes, develop students' thinking capacity and engage them in lessons.

Students are mature, well engaged in their work and understand how doing well at school will help them in future. They are socially responsible and raise funds for good causes. Students know whom to turn to if they have a problem. Students are advised well by their teachers and consequently they have positive views about the school and a good knowledge of their strengths and areas for development. Teachers keep a close check on students' individual progress.

Procedures to improve attendance are proficient and data is used to identify any student who has begun not to attend school as regularly. The number of suspensions was exceptionally high last year, 212 in total. The school has adopted a 'no tolerance' approach to poor behavior, using suspensions as a sanction as laid down in its behavior policy. The policy has been successful. Behavior is good and students' attitudes indicate that many are now making the most of what the school offers in lessons.

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Quality Statement 4: 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 is proficient.

The Principal has vision, which is leading to school improvement. There is a strong philosophy, which guides the work of the school, which is well supported by the work of the leadership team. Staff selection is considered and thorough. Students are developing into independent, thinking young people. Many procedures are well routinized and the school runs smoothly. Leaders have high expectations, such as of the quality of work expected from students. Decisions, planning and evaluations of data are shared; all departments follow a common agenda in discussions and adopt a collegiate approach to decision making. Therefore the capacity to improve further is good. However, there is still a need to continue to draw good practice together, such as about the students' 'habits of mind' and make them consistent school wide. Subject departments work too separately at times and students receive different messages about how to behave or about what to do in given circumstances.

The school responds to its self-evaluations positively with the view to accelerating students' progress. The interventions the school makes are helping students perform better. The school offers some single sex classes, which are aiding the concentration of boys. During one English lesson, the lead teacher had four other teachers in with her to watch how she taught a poetry lesson. Much was learned by students about how poetry can be read and by teachers about how to teach it well. Professional development of teachers is shared equally. The program is carefully matched to meet teachers' needs so that they can meet those of students better. Teachers revise plans and methods to improve students' performance and progress, particularly at this time of year when students are studying for exams.

Leadership empowers students and staff. All are part of the educative process. The school's process of self-evaluation has led to a broadly accurate picture of the school, though at times, the school is too critical of itself. The leadership team makes a positive contribution to the school's work by asking the Principal questions about the school's work and surveying the views of parents.

Quality Statement 5: 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 is proficient.

The school identifies strengths, as well as weaknesses in the performance of students and at all levels of the organization. The school's cycle of evaluation is proficient. Diagnostic tests and assessments play a central part in this process, for example to identify which students need which intervention. Regular assessments, attention to the quality of presentation of work, often good grading schedules, and discussions between teachers and students contribute positively to the process of accelerating students' progress. Teachers set students interim goals and all concerned have a clear notion of

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whether plans are on track to meet their end of year goals.

Teachers make appropriate comparisons of students' performances in classes. The Principal and staff regularly look for ways of helping individual students do better, by diagnosing strengths and weaknesses, and if necessary making changes to lesson planning. At the time of the year the review was carried out, teachers were seen to be responding successfully to students' needs. In a mathematics lesson, students were revising line equations effectively. The teacher had diagnosed that the students needed extra practice and ensured all were having success.

At a whole school level, as the school meets one set of goals, another set is created to take the school on. There is coherence in what the school plans and achieves. Any target that is in danger of not being met is discussed, and redefined if necessary. The school has identified several areas in the science curriculum that need attention. Students have a more limited understanding of enquiry and experimental approaches to work. Consequently, the school has spent more time teaching lessons about these areas this year.

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Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.	o	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English Language Arts, mathematics, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are "objective" when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards-based, • consistent across students, • capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice, <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the performance of different students to be compared, and • learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified. 		X	
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>		X	
<p>1.3 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, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>		X	
Quality Statement 2: 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.	o	✓	+
<p>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 it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>		X	
<p>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 warranting attention.</p>		X	
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>			X
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>		X	
<p>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</p>		X	

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Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	0	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.		X	
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.		X	
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. 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	
3.6 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	
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	

Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	0	✓	+
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 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 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.		X	

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Quality Statement 5: 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.	o	✓	+
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 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 interim 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 each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.		X	

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