



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Lower Laboratory School

Public School 77

**1700 3rd Avenue
New York
NY10128**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

This is an elementary school in Manhattan with 351 students enrolled in grades kindergarten through 5. Currently, 65% of the students are White, 13% are Asian, 15% are Hispanic and 6% are Black. The main language spoken is English. The school is not eligible for Title 1 funding. Special education students comprise just over 10% of the school population. There are currently no English language learners in the school. Attendance levels, at 94.7% in 2005, are above those of City and similar schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a high profile and is respected by the parents, staff and pupils.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Data is used very well to inform teaching and planning and this is leading to improved standards in English language arts and mathematics over the last few years.
- All children are known by the staff and their behavior is very good.
- The family atmosphere of the school is appreciated by the parents.
- There is a good team ethos among the teachers.
- Good professional development is promoting the goals of the school well.
- The school has good assessment procedures.
- Performance and progress are measured well.
- There are good enrichment activities.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop the strategic planning over a longer time period so that it can be used more pro-actively as a tool for improvement.
- Develop more flexible interim goals to drive successive goal setting and improvement planning.
- Ensure that more opportunities are provided for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction with the goal of further improving student outcomes.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The school's distinctiveness is apparent in its warm family atmosphere. The principal provides strong leadership and is well supported by her administrative team. Parents are very supportive, speak highly of the staff and are particularly pleased with the way their children are being challenged and cared for. Teaching is good. Data is used very well to establish teaching and learning objectives, which are then effectively geared to the needs of the students. Staff are extremely supportive of each other, very caring of the children and are committed to improving student achievement. Attendance is good and a positive indicator of the support that parents are also giving to the school. The school values the contributions which are made to its development by both parents and staff. It is doing well for its students but is also very committed to improvement and has the capacity to maintain and build upon its current achievements.

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.

The baseline data collated for all groups of students is comprehensive. Each member of staff has performance information for every student in their class. This includes all test scores and an analysis of individual levels attained. The administration regularly disseminates ongoing information gained from assessments and tests, which provide teachers with up-to-date data on the performance and progress of specific groups of students such as boys, girls and special education pupils for example. Staff effectively use this information to revise goals and plans. The data is also used well to compare the progress of students in each class and grade and to ensure that instruction is equally effective for all students.

The principal and her staff systematically compare students' individual progress and that of cohorts year on year. Since the principal came to the school, nearly two years ago, there has been an increased focus on the analysis of data and this has resulted in improvement in test results, particularly for English language arts and mathematics. The proportion of higher achieving students at levels 3 and 4 has increased and the percentage of lower achieving students at level 1 and 2 has decreased. The school analyses its results very well by academic subject to enable staff to identify areas for improvement. In addition to tracking trends in performance over time, the school also scrutinizes carefully the test scores of similar schools, so that it can benchmark its achievements against them.

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 school’s effective use of a range of assessment information enables the setting of challenging whole-school goals and ensures that students make good progress, particularly in English language arts and mathematics. All teachers have assessment folders and are very accurate in grading students’ work. This helps students to know and understand what they are doing well and what they need to do in order to improve. As a result, they are clear about the goals being set for them. Every child has an individual profile folder with annotated work showing what they know, understand and can do. Staff meet regularly to reflect upon the suitability of the next learning step for their students and refine their plans accordingly. This ensures that teachers’ planning is well matched to the needs of all students. There is a good team ethos among staff and excellent structures to support teachers in this process should they need it.

Teachers are always looking at ways of adapting and improving their methods of instruction to ensure that each student makes progress. Staff share ideas and discuss students’ progress individually, by class and grade level to reduce the chance of underachievement. Where it is necessary to refer underachieving students to the school community services, this is done efficiently and well-targeted intervention programs are established. Data is used effectively to set suitably challenging goals for special education students and their progress towards them is tracked carefully.

Parents are kept well informed of their child’s instructional program and are actively involved in discussions about their child’s progress. The school sees working closely with parents and carers as essential to students’ progress and tries hard to involve them in their children’s learning at all stages through, for example, mathematics mornings and literacy parties. Parents are also invited into school before their children are tested to discuss how they can help to support them. Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community.

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 well balanced curriculum has a clear focus on English language arts, mathematics and science. This, together with the good teaching apparent throughout the school, is effective in motivating the students to work hard. Differentiated instruction meets the needs of different ability groups effectively. Teachers are aware of their responsibility for ensuring that students progress as well as they can. They are not complacent and the school is seeking ways to improve the instruction for students with the highest academic ability. Student attitudes to learning are very positive. Every student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who will help them should they need it. Staff know their students well, both academically and personally. Achievement has improved as a result, particularly for special education students.

Budgeting decisions are carefully made in response to the needs of the students by, for example, the development of appropriate literacy programs. Staffing appointments are also determined by the needs of the students. For example, additional support staff and coaches have been provided to implement programs for science, music and counseling. The school schedule is amended appropriately to provide additional support in English language arts and mathematics for those few students who are achieving at the lower levels.

Attendance has been consistently good for the past three years. Nevertheless, it remains a high priority for the school and any absences are followed up efficiently.

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.

Staff enjoy working in this happy school which runs very smoothly on a daily basis because routines are well established and everyone is well supported. Staff are carefully selected and work together extremely well. They are not only chosen for their qualifications and their capacity to analyze data but also for their ability to fit into the collaborative atmosphere and strive for the success of every child at the school. Everyone is a committed member of the team.

The principal provides clear, focused and effective leadership. She is respected throughout the school by staff, students and parents alike for the way she challenges the students and ensures that they are happy. Parents attribute the success of their children to the principal's high expectations and her caring attitude. She has the skills and experience to drive forward the future developments of the school.

Teachers are committed to improving their skills and readily involve themselves in professional development. All are eager to use data effectively to improve their students' achievements. The principal monitors teaching regularly and shares her expectations with her staff. Performance data is also used well to identify the areas where professional development is most needed. As a result, there is a good range of opportunities provided which is well-focused on both whole school and individual needs. Regular opportunities are provided for teams of teachers to watch demonstration lessons as part of their professional development and the school is looking to increase the number of intervisitations to enhance this program. Teachers collaborate and plan together well in common preparation time. They all have the opportunity to see good practice in organized professional development sessions and through observing the coaches in class. These actions all have a positive impact on instructional practice.

The school works well with a range of services to support students' academic and social needs. Visiting specialists and coaches regularly provide teachers with fresh ideas and enable them to enhance learning, especially for lower achieving students. The wide range of enrichment activities, such as the lunch clubs, provides good opportunities for students to enhance their school experiences.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has effective monitoring and review procedures. The systematic analysis of data to benchmark progress has provided a good foundation for the process. The various meeting structures provide good opportunities for regular review and evaluation of the work of the school. At classroom level, teachers are self evaluative and are willing to take advice. The review process for individual classes has been helpful in this respect. Decision-making is shared and plans are prepared as a result of data analysis and teachers' knowledge of how individual students progress. The school is well aware of the progress made by students in relation to other similar schools and uses this data well to inform its own targets. The assessment folder compiled by each teacher is an effective mechanism for making interim evaluations of students' progress and an appropriate tool for planning intervention strategies.

Priorities for the Comprehensive Education Plan are suitably established as a collaborative exercise. However, although the plan is explicit about the goals to be achieved, it is not as useful as it could be for monitoring progress towards those goals. This is because interim goals are not sufficiently flexible to enable the school to easily identify whether or not it is on track to meet the targets set. Details of costings are also not as clear as they could be. The plan covers a comparatively short timescale to be really effective in improving student achievement further.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Lower Laboratory School (PS 77)	∅	✓	+
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	