



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Island School

Public School 188

**442 East Houston Street
Manhattan
NY 10002**

Principal: Barbara Slatin

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Reviewer: Frank Jones

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Island School. Public School 188, has 419 students enrolled from kindergarten through grade 8. Sixty eight per cent of the students are Hispanic, 29% are Black and 3% are from other ethnic groups. Of the school's population approximately 30% are special education students and 14% are English language learners. The school was an elementary school until 2004 when it was designated to include students in grades 6 through 8. The school attendance figures are slightly above those of City and similar schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is passionate about providing the very best for each student.
- The principal and the cabinet provide effective day-to-day leadership.
- The principal empowers staff and they are developing well.
- The breadth of the curriculum affords students a wide range of additional opportunities.
- The school understands the social needs of the students, cares deeply and provides extensive services to meet their needs. The school plays an important role in the community.
- The high quality of presentation throughout the school is a celebration of student work.
- The variety and use of technology enriches the curriculum.
- Teachers are very committed and give generously of their time to enhance student development.
- The information and support available to parents is welcomed.
- The learning environment for students is of a high standard and they both recognize and appreciate this.

What the school needs to improve

- Set long term quantifiable school goals that are time-framed and measurable.
- Evaluate the data that the school collects and make firm judgments about what is most effective to measure progress and inform learning.
- Increase the overall focus on academic achievement.
- Set goals and share with each student the incremental learning steps to achieve them.
- Revisit what the school means by differentiation to clarify understanding and ensure consistency with all teachers.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal and assistant principal have worked together for several years. They have transformed the school from one that had many challenges to a caring institution that now provides a rich and broad curriculum. The school has worked tirelessly to develop a high quality learning environment with a range of facilities to nurture and develop student talent. The students recognize this and speak with pride about their school and the care that the principal and the staff provide.

PS 188 is a full service inclusive school. All students with special needs are included in general education classes and benefit from being with their peers. Additional after school instruction is closely aligned to what takes place during the day. Several well-attended English language classes for the community enable parents to develop their own language skills and support their children. The principal and the staff are committed to the students and work closely together to provide for them.

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.

The school systematically gathers a large amount of data from a variety of sources but has yet to identify clearly which is most useful to them. The analysis of data with teachers is a productive exercise and they develop a greater understanding of its potential. The results of the City and State tests provide useful performance data. The school is able to explain any year to year alterations to levels attained by grade, class and student. The grow report is used to monitor the progress of each student and triggers intervention or enrichment activities as required. Students in grade 3 through 8 are able to view their Princeton interim assessments on line and find this useful to focus their own efforts.

Portfolios on each student, outlining what they know and can do, are discussed between relevant teachers so they are all aware of the achievement of all students they teach. Information from teacher assessments in September provides a useful benchmark to monitor progress. The quality of assessment in reading is particularly good and the school is now piloting similar systems in writing and mathematics.

The progress of all students is monitored on a regular basis followed by discussion in study groups with a member of the leadership team. Diagnostic tests are used, as necessary, for whole class and individual students, and these give detailed analysis of students' strengths and areas for development. Conferencing at classroom level enables teachers to focus their instruction on individual need.

The analysis of data relating to different ethnic groups is completed regularly, but does not identify any specific pattern. Those students performing in the lowest quartile are either

special education students or English language learners. Their progress is carefully monitored, but no comparisons are made with other groups. Individual education plans are in place for special education students and are monitored regularly. Data clearly indicates that the progress of these students has been enhanced by inclusion in general education classes rather than in self-contained classes, as was previously the case. Comparisons with similar schools are difficult because of the changing nature of the school. Grade by grade comparisons take place and are discussed in study group meetings. Subject, grade and student generate longitudinal information to show trends over time.

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.

Staff are keen to do their very best for students and this is reflected in their commitment to supporting them and in them providing a wide range of opportunities. This is a view held by students who consider that teachers have high expectations and are always available to help should it be required. The strong sense of collegiality ensures that the needs of individual students are shared and understood.

Data from question analysis of State tests and the grow report is not used consistently to set long term goals across the school. In the best cases teachers use the information to break down the content areas to identify what a student needs to learn to move up or within a level. In most cases, however, the goals lack rigor and focus on general rather than specific targets. In reading, however, each student has specific goals matched to ability and students make good progress with challenging texts.

The level of assessment is good at class level and is frequently used to modify and realign both instructional and individual student programs. Students are well supported in the class and the low student to teacher ratio is beneficial to student learning. Individual education plans include targets, which are evaluated on a regular basis within the year and modified as necessary.

The school sets high standards for itself and students. Parents acknowledge this and are made aware of the progress made by their children through parent/teacher meetings and the open door policy the school operates. The collection and analysis of social data provides comprehensive information on each student, which enables the school to give particular attention to improving the progress of students in greatest need of attention. Early intervention and support and enables the school to care for the whole child.

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 works hard to provide a rich and varied curriculum. The high quality and range of student work displayed in the school reflects the opportunities that are available. Students’ talents are fostered and this raises their confidence and self esteem. The highly

developed use of technology is a positive feature of the school and is effective in supporting learning across the curriculum.

Columbia University Teachers College readers and writers workshop model is used to implement the mandated balanced literacy curriculum. This provides valuable data and support to guide instruction. The school has not as yet evaluated the impact of this approach to see what adaptations may be required so that it fully meets the needs of all students. The school follows the mandated mathematics curriculum and uses three separate grade appropriate mathematics instructional programs to address student need. End of topic assessments are analyzed to provide information on what students know and can do. Teachers use this data to inform future learning programs and to make some modifications to instruction.

The regular joint planning sessions that take place within subject and grade areas enable staff to identify content areas that need further development, to highlight assessment opportunities and to compare standards. Teachers modify instruction to meet the needs of students in their classes. Students are challenged by the work they are given and are actively engaged by it. The leadership team discuss with teachers the standards achieved by students in their classes to monitor quality and progress. Teachers value this accountability and the support it offers them.

The budget is used extremely well to provide a range of high quality materials and learning environments. The library and 'internet café' give a positive message to students about how they are valued and their importance in the school. The inclusion policy of the school enables the expertise of teachers to be utilized in supporting individual students and class instruction. The flexible schedule allows students who no longer require mandated support to continue to receive help and therefore maintain improvement.

Students work independently and in groups displaying a high level of engagement and interest in most of what they do. Students express the view that the school has high expectations of them, they feel supported and can contact staff at any time should they need to. Teachers frequently work with students in their own time to ensure their needs are met. Parents and students, comment positively on the commitment of staff and the services the school provides for the community. The comprehensive procedures in place to monitor and improve attendance are effective.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal is well respected and liked by staff, students and parents particularly for her caring and supportive approach. The principal and cabinet provide drive and direction for the school and are uncompromising in their desire to provide a secure and rich environment. The principal has clear criteria when hiring staff and she has achieved a balance of youth and experience, which adds vibrancy to the school dynamic, and the empowerment she espouses. Training in the use of data is provided for all staff. The staff are mutually supportive displaying a high level of trust and enthusiasm to learn. This strong sense of collegiality and the willingness to share reflects the culture prevalent in the school and impacts positively on student learning. Teachers value the professional development they receive and view this as a key factor in improving their practice. Training to raise teacher confidence in the application of technology and maximize the

impact on learning took place prior to its use within the school. The principal and other members of the cabinet carry out regular monitoring of lessons both formal and informal. The scrutiny of work and results ensures they know the capabilities of each staff member. Professional development is targeted at needs that are identified from the comprehensive monitoring program. For example, the implementation of training prior to the introduction of palm pilots and other technology was instrumental in making this venture a success in supporting teacher confidence and student learning.

Study group and informal meetings take place on a regular basis and have a positive impact on both teaching and instructional programs. This close monitoring of students, resulting in intervention or enrichment strategies reflects the collaboration that takes place and the shared expertise that informs all decision-making. Close working with external community based organizations provides additional support for specific students. The school runs smoothly with well-established routines that are quickly learned and understood by students upon enrollment to school.

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.

Goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan are quantifiable but not time sensitive. The measures in place lack rigor and do not provide a strong framework from which to evaluate progress.

The effectiveness of the instructional programs is discussed regularly at study group meetings. Some teachers following evaluation of its applicability for students in greatest need of improvement have modified the recently introduced Teachers College program. In these cases the modification has led to a more appropriate match of task to student need.

When students learning needs are clearly identified through conferencing or on going teacher assessment, the information is used well to help students. Incremental steps are put in place and the impact on understanding is evaluated on a weekly basis. This level of attention to focus instruction and realign short-term goals is a good feature when consistently applied. Detailed annotations of student work are recorded and kept in extensive portfolios, which provide a comprehensive picture of progression and student outcomes.

The school is beginning to make the connection between data, instructional programs and the learning needs of students. Where it is well developed, as in the reading program, both staff and students know where they are, but importantly, know where they are going. Students welcome this knowledge and progress well as a result. The collegiality of the staff and the flexibility of the school schedule indicate the school is well place to make significant developments in the academic as well as social progress of the student.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Island School (PS 188)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 	X		
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 	X		
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.	X		
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.		X	
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	