



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Elementary School 106Q

Public School 106

**180 Beach 35 Street
Queens
NY 11691**

Principal: Marcella Sills

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Reviewer: Cheryl Baker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Elementary School 106Q serves 446 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Twelve percent are special education students and 4% are English language learners, for whom the predominant home language is Spanish. Eighty percent of students are Black, 13% are Hispanic, 3% are White, and 4% represent Asian and other backgrounds. The school is Title I eligible with the proportion of qualifying students exceeding the City average. Attendance averages slightly less than 93%, which is similar to City averages.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides strong, informed leadership for the implementation of the workshop model and balanced literacy.
- The principal holds teachers accountable for the improvement of instruction and student achievement.
- Professional development programs and instructional support from the principal, consultants and coaches aid teachers in implementing best practices.
- Common planning time and cross-grade retreats support the alignment of the curriculum.
- The school is effectively laying the groundwork for the implementation of an academically rigorous curriculum across kindergarten through grade 5.
- The principal has instituted firm expectations and consequences for student behavior.
- Students are well known and respected by teachers and administrators.
- The school has high expectations for student achievement and they are actively engaged in their learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Create more manageable formats for displaying and updating information about student achievement in order to support more individualized differentiation of instruction.
- Identify appropriate periodic diagnostic assessments of students' learning to provide deeper knowledge of their discrete learning needs, especially for early childhood students.
- Extend planning practices to infuse short-term measurable targets for the incremental measure of progress towards annual goals.
- Develop suitable practices and institute school-wide methods for dealing with students whose behavior disrupts learning.
- Explore methods to broaden the academic interventions available for students most at risk, to ensure that they make good progress.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school has undergone a rapid adoption of the mandated curriculum since the current principal assumed leadership in May 2005. Teachers are increasingly using data to understand their students and to plan lessons and they are well supported in learning new instructional techniques. Data inform the school's annual plans and the decisions that are made for the school's improvement. The school will broaden its academic focus with the institution of the Core Knowledge Curriculum as it moves forward and has been laying the foundation for this adoption.

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 uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative data to understand the progress of students, classrooms and grade levels. Teachers are required to maintain data folios containing scores from State and regional tests, Princeton review results, unit test results, students' reading levels and other pertinent data. These folios are used in planning and in communicating student progress at parent meetings, academic intervention meetings and in conferences with the principal, who rigorously monitors student progress. She and her staff also compare the progress of the school with its neighbors, its regional cohort schools, and its own past performance. Administrators monitor comparative progress of grade levels and academic subject areas.

The school assesses its English language learners and special education students in accordance with State mandates and the stipulations of their particular learning plans. Specialists are assigned to monitor the progress of these students with respect to program placement and interventions. The school is aware of the relative progress of its ethnic and other sub-groups.

With respect to other categories of interest, the school monitors the progress of students in its gifted and talented classes to ensure that they continue to achieve at high levels and that their placement in these more demanding academic settings is appropriately supported. Additionally, the school is focusing on increasing academic rigor at grades 1 and 2 as a result of the analysis of grade 3 State tests scores that revealed weaknesses in writing. The school is also working to address patterns of misbehavior among its upper grade students and has instituted a zero tolerance policy. Incident reports are scrutinized to access causes, solutions and progress.

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.

Under the current principal, the school leadership team has formulated the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan in accordance with State mandates. The plan sets forth clear annual targets for improving various aspects of the school. The plan is not specific with respect to objectively measurable short-term goals and timelines. The principal’s performance review and the monthly professional development calendar reflect and support the goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Teachers receive copies of the plan and are generally aware of goals such as reducing the number of students at level 1 and increasing those performing at levels 3 and 4, instituting balanced literacy and the transition to the Core Knowledge curriculum. Copies are available for parents. The principal communicates the school’s progress at monthly meetings for parents, who are heartened by its continued improvement.

Groups that are a particular focus area receive appropriate attention and planning. For example, students who are in danger of not being promoted receive tutoring and support in developing promotional portfolios. Students who are suspended receive instructional packets, and plans for re-entry include counseling. The safety committee meets regularly to discuss the effectiveness of behavioral interventions. Students identified for academic interventions are grouped in classes based on their State test scores so as to accommodate in-class support by academic intervention teachers. For those most at risk, such as English language learners and special education students, individual plans are created and individualized programs are in place to support their learning. The overall progress of these groups has generally not been as strong as their general education counterparts. The school also provides tutorials through the extended day program, although poor attendance sometimes negates the effect of this intervention.

The school communicates its expectations for student achievement to parents and students through meetings, written notices and conferences. Students are evaluated regularly and parents receive monthly reports of their child’s progress, thus engaging them in dialogue regarding academic achievement. The school provides accelerated academic classes at each grade and students, parents and teachers expect these high achieving students to excel on all levels which, for the most part, they do.

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.

Under the current principal, the school has been brought into strict compliance with the region’s rigorous literacy and mathematics prototype. This demanding framework for the delivery of instruction encompasses the workshop model and institutionalizes approaches to writing and literacy. Teachers are held to strict expectations that they deliver the curriculum as written and in accordance with the prescribed timeframes. To increase the academic rigor the school has committed to adopting the Core Knowledge curriculum, a key initiative the Knowledge Network, across all grades and has piloted portions of this program in some classes, to good effect.

The principal reviews lesson plans, samples student work and makes frequent visits to classrooms to ensure that teachers are delivering the curriculum and improving student performance as expected. Teachers differentiate their instruction by activity and by learning level to increasing effect within classrooms that are heterogeneously grouped, except for the gifted and talented classrooms. The routine differentiation at the level of the individual student is less common.

Students find their lessons to be interesting and challenging and lessons incorporate active learning to good effect. They feel well supported by their teachers and the administration, naming many as friends and confidants. School attendance is increasing and currently is nearing 93% on average. The school has well-established practices with respect to student attendance and promptness, which includes home visits when warranted.

The principal bases decisions regarding the budget, staffing and scheduling on student achievement and other pertinent data. For example, her assessment of the need for rigor in the curriculum influenced the decision to join the knowledge network and the adoption of the new curriculum. Funds have been allocated to support new texts, materials and teacher training. Support personnel for English language learning, academic intervention services and early childhood balanced literacy instruction were hired in response to the analysis of student achievement data. Teachers' schedules were changed to incorporate common grade level planning time to support coherent horizontal delivery of the curriculum.

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

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The principal's criteria for new hires include knowledge of balanced literacy, guided reading, and the Core Knowledge curriculum. Candidates model lessons and are queried on their assessment of student learning. She is respected especially for her deep knowledge of the workshop model and balanced literacy and she routinely monitors the delivery of the curriculum through formal and informal classroom observations. Her clear focus on improving instruction and academic rigor has led, and will continue to lead, the school forward. She has instituted clear expectations for students and teachers and has instituted procedures for the daily operation of the building that support the school's efficient functioning.

Teachers are supported in their instructional improvement through study groups, grade level conferences, faculty conferences, and after-school workshops. The school has also offered extensive summer professional development for the institution of the mandated curriculum. Coaches and consultants assist in skill building in English and mathematics instruction. Teachers have been provided the opportunity to visit classrooms to view examples of strong instruction. Additionally, the school has held a number of cross-grade faculty retreats to increase the vertical alignment of the curriculum and to provide initial training relative to the Core Knowledge program adoption, thus preparing the staff for the demands of a new curriculum.

The governance of the school is collaborative and team-based. The administrative team meets weekly to address issues and monitor progress towards instructional and academic

goals and to plan professional development. The teachers plan collaboratively and evaluate student progress during regular grade conferences. Monthly grade conferences between staff and administration, regular union consultation meetings and school leadership team meetings provide avenues for the school to candidly discuss its progress and plan for improvement.

The school has received grant support for after-school arts programs that enrich students' exposure to dance and music. Various civic and social service agencies support specific populations at the school. These relationships are not, however, directly influential in helping the school to meet its academic goals. The school relies on its own programs for improving student achievement.

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.

School plans, such as the Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's performance review, express goals for long term improvement and do not include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress. The school's professional development schedule of monthly offerings supports the attainment of the school's long-term goals and the principal's relentless focus on meeting her goals for the institution of the region's prototype and raising student achievement. The school is operationally flexible with respect to adjusting actions and reallocating resources to meet the needs of students or programs and intends to formalize its short-term planning practices as it modifies its instructional program.

At the classroom level, the administration monitors the progress of students especially through the review of report cards and progress reports, to see if students' grades are reflective of their performance on standardized tests. This sheds light on the effectiveness of instruction and teachers' expectations for students. It has informed interventions such as re-assigning students to a higher grade for instruction in a subject in which they excel and has redirected academic intervention teachers and coaches to support teachers or students in need. Comparisons of student progress across schools informed the decision to increase the rigor for all students at the school by joining the knowledge network.

The school has found that teacher tests, regional assessments, student work portfolios and unit tests are most useful in providing periodic assessments of student learning. Committees such as the pupil-personnel team and the academic-intervention team along with grade-level teams, use the results of these assessments to gauge progress and measure the effectiveness of instruction and interventions. The cabinet periodically collects class sets of student writing samples to evaluate progress in attainment of sound writing skills. The Princeton Review has proved less effective in providing the anticipated diagnostic information to aid teachers in revising plans and interventions.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Elementary School 106Q (PS 106)	∅	✓	+
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	