

**Jean Nuzzi Intermediate School
213-10 92nd Avenue
Queens Village
New York, 11428**

Principal: Shango Blake

Dates of review: 10-12th May, 2006

**Reviewer: Stephen Walker
Cambridge Education**

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PART1: The School Context.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Jean Nuzzi School is a large intermediate school with over 1,500 students. It is located in Queens Village among middle class one family homes. The school community is comprised of students from culturally diverse backgrounds. The majority of the students are Black but there are also a significant number of Asian and Latino students. The local community is home to many new immigrants from Guyana, Haiti and Jamaica. There is a highly mobile transient population, which hinders designation as a Title 1 school. The majority of students are from low-income families and 45% of the students are eligible for Free Lunch. The students range from sixth to eighth grades with a population that includes a significant number of English Language Learners and students with special education needs. The school motto is 'The TIME IS Now (Teaching-Innovation-Motivation-Excellence)

PART 2: OVERVIEW.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Jean Nuzzi Intermediate School has improved significantly over the last few years.
- The principal provides strong and charismatic leadership. Parents, teachers and the community greatly respect his focused vision for the school.
- There is a positive climate in the school resulting in pro-active behavior and improved student commitment to the school.
- There has been a significant improvement in the academic performance and attendance of the students.
- A uniform dress code has been adopted successfully by the school.
- The majority of teaching is at the standard base level and promotes effective learning.
- The school and teachers have become more effective in monitoring student performance.
- Academic Intervention programs support students who require additional help with their work.
- There are good examples of innovative curriculum, which increase the engagement of the students.
- The school works well with the parent and community groups in order to enhance the effectiveness and reputation of the school.
- There is a wide and varied program of enrichment activities with a good level of student participation.
- The school is continually evaluating its performance and seeking new ways to improve the learning and progress of the students.
- The principal and core leadership team ensure that the school has a strong capacity for further improvement.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO IMPROVE

- Raise the performance level across the school in relation to similar schools in the city.
- Develop a targeted program to support the low achievers and students at risk in order to raise their performance.
- Improve further the performance outcomes for special needs students while ensuring that they are set realistic and attainable targets.
- Make more effective use of assessment data in order to analyze differences in performance and progress by gender and ethnic groups.
- Develop a more standardized system for all teachers to record assessment information, areas for development and target levels for individual students.
- Revise and plan the curriculum for English Language Arts so that it is specific to the individual needs of students.
- Develop further the curriculum so that is more appropriate to meet the needs of all the students including the lower achieving and potentially disengaged students.
- Develop the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning.
- Improve the general school environment with a planned program of refurbishment in both the classrooms and corridors.
- Encourage more parental involvement with the school particularly among the parents of low attaining and at risk students.

PART 3: MAIN FINDINGS

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with some well-developed features. There have been significant improvements in behavior, attendance and progress of students over the last few years. The school has a strong capacity for further improvement.

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 of the school's work is proficient

The school and teachers have become more effective in monitoring student performance. The core leadership team understands the whole school picture when comparing the school with similar and other schools in the city. There has been an impressive improvement in the state and city tests across the grades although the percentage of students meeting performance levels 3 and 4 is still below average. There is a shared vision by the leadership team and teachers to raise the performance level across the school. The school uses the Princeton Review to analyze topics that need to be focused on for the tests. They also use the Grow Report analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the individual students.

Members of the core leadership analyze the assessment data for the subject areas they supervise and highlight underperformance according to teaching groups and individual students. Teachers are very aware of the importance of test results and work hard to raise the performance in their teaching groups. The school is data rich but it now needs to make more effective use of the information to analyze and interpret the varying performance and progress of different groups of students. For example, there is little comparison done between different subject areas and the school could make more effective use of assessment data in order to identify differences in performance and progress by gender and ethnic groups.

There has been an impressive improvement in attendance and the monitoring system generates a weekly report for the leadership team. Absences are followed up quickly and the school analyzes an individual student's pattern of attendance. Attendance rates are now over 93% and the school has put in place effective strategies to follow up non-attenders.

The school is increasingly using data to monitor performance, progress and attendance but knows that it now needs to look at the information in a more sophisticated manner so that the data can help the school raise further the performance of the students.

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 of the school's work is proficient

Many students arrive at the school with levels of attainment well below that which is expected. However, the improved culture and proficient teaching ensure that most students make progress during their time at the school. Although performance levels 3 and 4 in state tests at 8th grade are below those in similar schools, they are now higher than city schools as a whole in math and science. Teachers are using the previous year's performance information to set targets for individual students. The school has introduced Teacher Assessment Notebooks (TAN) for all teachers to record assessment results and provides additional data on the strengths and weaknesses of the students in the different subjects. However, there is still a lack of consistency in how teachers record information across the subjects and the school needs to develop a more standardized system for all teachers to record assessment information, areas for development and target levels for individual students.

Students are generally aware of their predicted levels and know what actions they have to take in order to achieve these targets. Records of progress are sent to parents three times a year and Parent Consultations are held twice a year. Students who are not reaching their grades are placed on the Academic Intervention Programs. Additional classes are provided after school and through the Saturday Academy in order to help them with their work. The school has been proactive especially in inviting parents into school for those students who are underachieving. The school has identified a group of low performing boys in 6th grade and introduced a *Manhood Class* to support these students during their first year at the middle school. There is additional support for special needs students but the school could improve the performance outcomes for these students while ensuring that they are set realistic and attainable targets. The school now needs to raise the performance of the low achievers and those at risk by developing a targeted program of support. A long-term development for the school is to encourage more parental involvement with the school particularly among the parents of low attaining and vulnerable students.

Although the school is setting subject targets for individual students, it is also aware that the system of tracking can be improved and there is a need to support the underachieving students.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient with some aspects that are well developed

The curriculum map provides a core provision in English Language Arts, Math and Science. The school is also aware of the immediate issue of revising and planning the curriculum provision in English Language Arts so that it is specific to the individual needs of students. There are good examples of curriculum innovation, which increase the engagement of the students. Arts education is one of the strengths of the school with an emphasis on creativity, participation and developing student confidence. The program includes music, dance, film and the visual arts. The school recently embarked on a whole school creative arts project and produced a video about the school and its mission. The school has strong curriculum support with community partners such as City Center Theater, Arts Genesis, City Lights and Kennedy Airport. There is a wide range and varied program of enrichment activities with a good level of student participation. The challenge for the school is to further develop the curriculum so it is more appropriate to meet the needs of all the students including the lower achieving and potentially disengaged students.

Budgeting and staffing deployments are aligned to improve student outcomes. Attendance procedures are appropriately rigorous and information is used to identify patterns and problems. Teachers and support staff in the school know the students well and give them time and appropriate support.

The majority of teaching is at the standard base level and promotes effective learning. There are some outstanding teachers and the school should continue to develop strategies to share good practice in teaching that could further improve the quality of learning across the school. There is a need to develop the provision of technology as a tool for both teaching and learning. In the best lessons teachers motivate and inspire the pupils so that they are fully engaged and challenged by the work. They maintain an energetic pace to the lessons with a variety of interesting and enjoyable activities. Good teaching ensures that pupils understand the work and are able to make significant progress in a supportive manner. In some lessons the students are not managed well and thus show no real enthusiasm or commitment to the work. Activities are not always well matched according to students' needs.

Instructional programs, practices and arrangement engage the students but there is scope to develop further the curriculum and improve the standards of teaching across the school.

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 of the school's work is well developed

The principal provides strong and charismatic leadership. Parents, teachers and the community greatly respect his focused vision for the school. There has been a significant improvement in the academic performance and attendance of the students. The core leadership team has been well chosen to provide a driving force for school improvement. Each member has a whole school responsibility and the principal encourages a consultative style of management within this group. New contractual arrangements allow the school to select their own teachers who will support the vision for the school. The school has good links with the local universities and this supports training of new staff as well as helping with the recruitment of teachers.

The school through the regular planning meetings as well as teacher development meetings encourages professional development. Lesson observations are now well established in the school with the aim of improving both the teaching and learning in the school. Teachers appreciate feedback from observations in order to work on their areas for development. Peer observation has been introduced and there is subject support through the literacy and math coaches.

The school monitors performance and constantly looks at ways to improve the individual performance of students. Teachers share the vision for improvement and know that they are important stakeholders in the development of the school. The school works well with the parent and community groups in order to enhance the effectiveness and reputation of the school. The new parent group called Parents Empowering Students Today (PEST) has been proactive in supporting the school in the community. Impressive links with the community include the local merchants support for the literacy program and the YMCA after school program of activities.

The school runs smoothly on a daily basis. There is a positive climate in the school resulting in pro-active behavior and improved student commitment to the school. There has been a significant improvement in the academic performance and attendance of the students. The school has adopted a uniform dress code successfully.

Leadership is a strength of the school as the principal and leadership team have worked hard with the teachers to ensure a clear focus on student performance and progress.

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 of the school's work is proficient

Teachers are regularly assessing the students through a variety of formative and summative assessments. There are systems through which all teachers are accountable for assessing and evaluating students' progress. Intervention programs help students improve their performance although many students are still underachieving in their schoolwork. Teachers are constantly reviewing achievement levels so that the teaching program is aligned to the needs of the students. The introduction of the Teacher Assessment Notebook has highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. The regular common planning and grade meetings ensure that student progress is tracked and shared with colleagues. Intervention programs are well managed and there is evidence of gains in reading, writing and numeracy for many students. The school provides for good support for many English Language Learners.

The school is proactive in chasing parents who do not attend the consultation meetings. Teachers use many opportunities to enlist the support of parents to help their children and to tackle underperformance. The system for monitoring attendance is well developed and has led to a decline in truancy rates.

The school is continually evaluating its performance and seeking new ways to improve the learning and progress of the students. The core leadership is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The self-evaluation form provided an accurate picture of the school and identified many of the key issues for development. The Comprehensive Education Plan provides a guide to the priorities for the year. There are clear targets with success criteria, actions and monitoring arrangements. The school may consider a long-term plan for the development of the technology infrastructure in order to support teaching and learning. There is also a need to develop a long-term strategy to improve the general school environment with a planned program of refurbishment in both the classrooms and corridors.

The principal and core leadership team are aware of the strengths and areas for development in the school. The school is constantly reviewing its plans and adjusting them throughout the year. There are exciting plans for improvement and the school has a strong capacity for further improvement.

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PART 4: EVALUATION CRITERIA GRADE SUMMARY

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Final Evaluation	0	✓	+
Overall Quality of the school			
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, math, 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	

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

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	