



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Jacob Blackwell School

Public School 111

**37-15 13 Street
Queens
NY 11101**

Principal: Randy Seabrook

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Reviewer: John Hudson

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Jacob Blackwell School is a public school which provides education for 400 students from prekindergarten through grade 6. The school will expand to include grade 7 from September 2007 and grade 8 from September 2008. Just over half the students are Black, a further third are Hispanic and less than 10% are White. The main languages spoken are English and Spanish. One in eight students is an English language learner and one in six is a special education student.

The proportion of students with Title 1 eligibility, at 91%, is substantially higher than the average for similar and City schools. At 90%, attendance is just below City and similar school averages.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, supported by her assistant principal, provides inspirational leadership to drive forward the quality of education for her students.
- The school makes very good use of data, including diagnostic assessment data, to match the curriculum and instruction to the needs of all learners including English language learners, special education students and other vulnerable groups.
- Very good use is made of the budget to reduce the size of classes, provide support where it is most needed and to raise achievement.
- Students are very well cared for and respected.
- The school makes excellent use of a wide range of partnerships to support the learning needs of students.
- Good attendance and punctuality are very high priorities.
- Staff work together collaboratively and effectively to promote student learning.
- Teachers create interesting lessons to engage students.
- The school building provides a stimulating learning environment and is maintained to an extremely high level of cleanliness.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop the use of structured diagnostic assessment and interim goals in all subject areas and grade levels to ensure effective tracking of student achievement.
- Continue to develop differentiated instruction to match the learning needs of all students.
- Further develop the process of involving parents in the ongoing education of their children.
- Take advantage of the many strengths within the school to promote self- and peer-review and the sharing of best practice.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

The school uses available data very well to match work to the needs of learners. Most areas of the school are very well developed with regular diagnostic assessment against interim targets. For example, reading, writing and mathematics programs in prekindergarten through grade 2 enable teachers to keep a very close watch on the progress of all individuals and groups of students. Regular analysis of achievement data enables rapid decisions to be made on learning plans so they are responsive to changing student circumstances. The needs of students at greater risk of underachievement, including special education students, English language learners and others in greatest need of improvement are very well served by the school.

The school's success is based on the very high expectations of its principal, who knows the children well and is determined that her students will achieve ambitious academic goals. She is very well supported in her plan by her assistant principal, staff and the majority of her students and their parents.

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 collection and use of data is a high priority and the school gathers a very broad range of State and other assessment information. Detailed diagnostic data is collected from programs the school has adopted, one of which includes frequent interactive assessments to aid achievement, as well as weekly tests and classroom grade assessments. In addition, the school uses a wide range of records, logs and focused classroom observation reports to monitor progress. With this information, together with data on student attendance, punctuality and behavior, the principal, her assistant principal, mathematics and literacy coaches, the academic intervention teacher, classroom teachers and other staff maintain a very detailed and up to date understanding of student progress and achievement. Information relevant to each classroom is regularly updated and stored for easy reference in substantial and well used data notebooks located in all classrooms.

Progress in literacy and mathematics is tracked on an almost daily basis in prekindergarten through grade 2 classrooms. Progress of students, classrooms and grade levels is monitored at least monthly in grades 3 through 6. Great care is taken to analyze regularly updated data to monitor the progress of ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students and other groups of students, including early readers, students who are not at grade level and who are at risk of not achieving grade level. Careful planning is taking place to ensure students in grade 6 are tracked with particular care as they progress towards high school.

The principal and her assistant principal have a very clear understanding of the progress of students within classrooms, across classrooms and across subject areas so that underachievement is identified and immediate action taken to remedy it. Comparisons are made with the school's own past performance and reveal continuing improvements in English outcomes and even greater improvements in mathematics. The principal monitors the school's performance against similar and City schools.

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 with well-developed features.

There is a continuing debate involving all members of staff about the progress of students and groups of students. The school has a carefully structured routine for setting demanding, objectively measurable goals and plans to realize them. Collaborative teams examine end of year achievement and other information together with start of year baseline test results to set challenging individual student, group and grade level interim goals and plans to reach overall school targets. Over the past year the school gave much greater attention to progress in mathematics than before. Demanding goals were set and plans to achieve them were successful. The school is continuing to put great emphasis on student achievement in English, mathematics and science in State tests.

The school is very successful in its use of interim goals and plans to improve the performance and progress of prekindergarten through grade 2 students, English language learners, special education learners and other groups of particular interest, including those in greatest need. It is planning to spread this good practice to other grade levels and across all subject areas.

The very high expectations of the principal are shared by her staff and the majority of her students, who attend school very regularly, set themselves high standards of punctuality and behavior, work hard, do their homework and learn effectively. The principal has been able to convey these aspirations to a growing proportion of parents, some of whom are very strong supporters of the school and champions of their children's success. The school plans to increase the regularity of student report cards over the next year so that parents are better informed of the achievement and progress of their children.

The principal, her assistant principal, parents and teachers are involved through the school leadership team planning committee in the continuing drive to raise achievement.

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 with well-developed features.

Regular collaborative planning meetings refine and improve focused plans to deliver the mandated curriculum to meet the needs of all students. The school has been particularly successful in matching the curriculum to the needs of learners in prekindergarten through grade 2, English language learners, special needs students, and students with greatest

need. In these areas, achievement is measured daily and used to track the progress of individuals. In these cases, immediate action is taken if interim targets are not met.

Teachers plan a differentiated approach to meet the needs of learners across the range of achievement present in every classroom. This is more effective for younger students and in English, mathematics and science where diagnostic data is generated more frequently, progress tracked more precisely and more rapid action taken in the event of under achievement. The principal uses data to follow student progress and to measure the effectiveness of teachers, who are accountable for the progress of each student.

The school makes very good use of data to target its resources to meet the needs of learners. The principal ensures that there are sufficient teaching and support staff and other resources to meet curriculum needs and to provide appropriate levels of support for students with greatest need. The school enjoys generous support from sponsors who provide tutors to work to improve literacy in classrooms and after school most days of the week.

In prekindergarten through grade 2 and small focused groups of learners, such as in special education classes, teachers provide well paced activities and challenging interim goals with rapid action where under achievement is identified. Levels of engagement are generally very high throughout the school.

Staff know their students very well and respond to their educational and personal needs. Levels of mutual respect and trust are generally very high. Students feel confident they can confide in their teacher if there is a need. Good attendance is celebrated and absences checked with a call home. Students are required to catch up on any work they have missed.

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 with well-developed features.

The principal is looking for teachers with very high expectations of student progress and achievement, for whom their students are the priority and whose training is specific to grade. There is a clear expectation that all teachers will learn to analyze data to understand student performance and devise plans for raising achievement.

Professional development needs are identified at the year end planning stage and through regular collaborative planning meetings, formal classroom observations and self-review. Training is underway on developing curriculum planning to include regular diagnostic assessment and increased sophistication in the use of data to gain a deep understanding of student performance. Teacher observation and self- and peer-evaluation are not well developed yet.

The principal formally observes each teacher's classroom with detailed feedback at least twice yearly. More regular focused walkthrough observations are used to track important issues including levels of student engagement and the quality of instruction.

There is a detailed schedule of collaborative team meetings, including planning meetings and grade reviews. Interim goals and plans are reviewed and fine tuned to meet student

needs and raise achievement. Meetings encourage participation, different viewpoints are exchanged and decisions taken. The meetings are focused and effective.

The principal is highly respected for her clear capacity to effect change which has already led to significant improvement in student achievement and self respect. The school is a calm learning environment. Procedures are clear and effective and students feel safe.

The school makes very good use of support services and outside bodies, including a large group of tutors who provide additional support in literacy through small group instruction and one to one tutoring, to achieve demanding academic goals.

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 with well-developed features.

The use of data to drive the setting of ambitious goals with effective planning to achieve them is embedded in the school. There is a clear annual cycle of establishing goals relating to student performance over the previous year but which move the school forward to meet longer term goals. The school has developed very good use of frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments to objectively measure progress towards stated goals. This is particularly apparent in prekindergarten through grade 2. The school's use of this method of tracking progress also extends to special education students, English language learners and other groups of interest to the school, including students in greatest need of improvement.

The school administration and designated planning teams review student performance data within and across classrooms on a regular basis to scrutinize the progress of plans and interventions. Where progress is unsatisfactory, plans are adjusted. A recent example was when a major literacy program was abandoned and a new program installed because progress was not enabling students to reach stated goals by the agreed timeframe. Frequent changes are made to curriculum plans so that interim and longer term goals are met.

The school operates an effective annual cycle for the review, revision and implementation of goals and plans. Interim goals and plans are set much more frequently and on a subject and grade level basis, down to daily fine tuning with some early reading programs, for example.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Jacob Blackwell School (PS 111)	∅	✓	+
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	