



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Walter Francis Bishop School

Public School 160

**109-59 Inwood Street
Queens
NY 11435**

Principal: Jermaine Garden

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Reviewer: David Taylor

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 160, William F Bishop, was built in 1939 and is a Title I school, for students from pre-kindergarten to 6th grade. The school enrollment currently numbers 766 students. There is high student mobility. The staff has a majority of teachers with fewer than ten years of experience and the school Comprehensive Education Plan has identified the need for intensive professional development activities, partly for that reason. The school has been a School Wide Program school for 15 years, and receives funding from this for several specialists. Test scores, which have shown improvement, place it close to the average for similar and City-wide schools. Academic intervention services are in place during the school day and after school, when there is an extended day program for students in grades 3-6 who are at performance level 1 or 2 in reading and mathematics. A part time teacher provides pull-out services for designated talented and gifted students in grades 2-6 each week. The school has participated for nine years in the Project Arts Program, with a particularly close collaboration with the Midori Foundation, offering professional support to music students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Both teaching and non-teaching staff show warmth and loyalty towards the school and its children.
- The sustained efforts of the school's leaders have created an outstanding tone and climate for learning, with relationships characterized by respect, support and tolerance.
- Regular use of a wide range of data and records enables the school to identify students' individual learning needs and, often, to display detailed knowledge and perceptive understanding of these.
- The newly established cabinet is highly regarded by the school community and offers dedicated, energetic and effective leadership, with its members possessing complementary styles and skills to provide strong partnership.
- The regular observations which the principal and assistant principals make, both formally and informally, lead to sharply focused and sensitively worded feedback to the teachers.
- Methods of instruction are broadly suitable and varied, generally accompanied by careful planning and specific learning objectives.
- Attitudes of students in class are positive, showing generally high levels of motivation and engagement.
- There are encouraging initiatives aimed at ensuring that the curriculum offers a real challenge to students.

What the school needs to improve

- Continued priority to professional development for all teachers focusing on effective methodology and command of subject content.
- Ensuring that all teachers understand how the detailed analysis of data can inform their planning and day-to-day assessment of students' progress.
- Maintaining its current efforts to give greater integration to the whole curriculum.
- Continuing to seek opportunities to enrich the learning experience of students in developing practical, technological and creative skills, including the use of information technology, and subject content and skills in science and social studies.
- Sustained exploration of how to give students greater responsibility for their own learning and for developing such skills as public presentation and the management of sustained projects.
- Further review of time management in the lesson, the day and the week, in order to maximize curricular opportunities for students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school, with some well-developed features.

There are many strengths in the school's work. It has a welcoming culture, with an excellent tone set by the cabinet and teaching staff. The students are friendly, outgoing and obviously love being there. This same warmth is evident in the relationships set by all those working in and with the school. The leadership of the principal and assistant principals is powerful: they command respect and support, are outstanding role models and provide inspiration to those they work with. They are self critical and always aim for improvement.

Management of the school is thorough and focused, with good recording systems to collect a wide range of data. Teachers analyze the data thoughtfully and apply their findings to their work with students. There is an evident concern with the individual, and several teachers show skill in adjusting their instructional plans to offer challenging opportunities to all of the class. The school is open and receptive to the community, and uses external support to offer stimulus to its students, including partnerships with arts organizations. There are good efforts to involve parents, although the numbers participating in activities are still low.

The curriculum is dominated by literacy and mathematics, and this strong emphasis is generally successful in allowing students to progress at a good rate in these skills. The work undertaken in other curricular areas is not so well developed, and suffers from teachers' lack of confidence in how to plan a progressive learning experience within, especially, social studies and science. There is some good work in music and art, but this is not fully developed. In computing and technology there are encouraging, but still early, points of growth.

The strengths described above indicate that the school can be expected to continue to make sustained progress towards giving all students a consistently successful educational experience.

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 school has fully developed systems for collecting and storing data. It uses a wide range of test scores and other external assessments to understand how its students are doing, and supplements these by well chosen forms of internal assessment. The cabinet is successful in providing grade teachers with helpful and regularly updated information based on these results, and teachers use this knowledge to plan the curriculum and instruction in accordance with students' needs. Members of staff closely study the profiles of particular skill areas provided for students in their grade, and note aspects which then need particular reinforcement.

The use of data is especially good in the school's work with its special education children and provides appropriate focus to respond to personal needs and individual education plans. There are good indications that the academic intervention service team is working effectively to raise the level of students' performance and address their particular learning difficulties. Small group sessions led by specialist teachers are organized to good effect.

The school looks closely at how its own data can be compared with findings from other schools, and it uses external benchmarking as a way of checking and then improving its own performance.

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.

The school's own evaluation of this area of its work identifies a number of specific ways in which it uses data to set measurable goals for instruction, especially through the use of small groups working on specialized programs. The administration is aware that high rates of absence by some students as an issue requiring continued attention.

The school is committed to the effective application of data to learning, and in a number of ways it is already proving successful in developing collaborative efforts linked to clear timeframes. Analysis leads to action, and careful attention to detail is paying off as teachers address individual needs and draw on the additional services available to them.

In some classes the planning undertaken by teachers is insufficiently developed to permit the setting of appropriately challenging tasks for all students. In a minority of classes, learning objectives are perfunctory and undifferentiated and there is not enough challenge, especially for those students working at the higher achievement levels. More thorough consideration of how to use the materials or content selected to make clear teaching points that move students' learning ahead decisively is required to give a stronger sense of purpose. The school is aware of this, and actions taken by the administration are beginning to have a noticeably beneficial effect.

Increasing the involvement of parents or caregivers in students' learning is a difficult area to address effectively, because of variations in their availability or desire to support meetings convened for them. The school's efforts, however, have been considerable, and it has been willing to explore changing meeting times to encourage higher levels of attendance.

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 curriculum is closely aligned to City mandates, with a large majority of available teaching time devoted to literacy and mathematics. There is an intention to integrate other subject areas into lessons and, although this is beginning to have some impact, it is still sporadic and not systematically embedded. The quality of work in areas outside English language arts and mathematics varies, with good instances counterbalanced by superficial treatment of, for example, historical ideas that arise in the course of students’ reading. Creative, practical work occurs in some areas, but opportunities are constrained by time shortage.

The school has undertaken a number of initiatives for literacy and mathematics to ensure that the evidence collected feeds through to the learning of each student. It directs its Title I funds carefully at its instructional programs, and ensures that resources are available to support learning. It has also sought to ensure the effective implementation of specific curricular programs, especially those for balanced literacy and Everyday Math. In the most successful classes, the alignment of curriculum and assessment to students’ learning is clear and sustained. Teaching methods that encourage individuals to extend their thinking in pairs, for example, in a class looking at how to distinguish opinion from fact, provide evidence that the intended learning is taking place. Good use of lively pace, energetic questioning and a warm, humorous relationship helps to ensure that all students remain engaged and focused. In other classes, achievement occasionally suffers from rather low level objectives: the fact that expectations of students are not always high enough means that the activities fail to fully motivate them.

One strength of the school’s work is its skill in ensuring that students’ personal and social development is not neglected. There are positive examples in the use of external stimulus, such as visits from authors and the Midori musicians, as well as the more general evidence that staff are aiming to promote all aspects of students’ development. The ‘Glee Club’, a fifty-strong voluntary choir preparing for a forthcoming concert, is particularly successful, resulting in an infectious joy in song and dance which shines from the faces and movements of the students. Behavior around the school and in class is excellent, and children are able to learn in an atmosphere of mutual trust.

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 has sought to develop a team of staff who share his high aspirations and strong vision for the school. Although there are structural limits to his freedom to do so, he has worked extremely well with the teachers he has, while bringing in new teachers where possible and encouraging skilled practitioners to accept enhanced responsibilities. He is developing a highly proficient senior team in his cabinet. His own thoughtful, quietly effective and highly respected leadership is complemented by an exceptionally able and dynamic assistant principal, and the two are now joined by a new and most promising appointee. The three are eager to build similarly effective teamwork at each grade level

and in the groups that have been created, and the results of this are becoming apparent in the improved thinking about curricular goals and individual needs that are now emerging.

The school's self evaluation emphasizes the importance of finding time to give an adequate allocation to professional development, in order to move the school on to the next stage of its development. Many staff have clearly already benefited from professional development opportunities that they have been able to bring back into the classroom and share with their colleagues. A less structured but no less valuable form of support comes from the quality of the feedback which teachers receive both orally and in writing when one of the cabinet visits their class, either for one of the required formal observations or when undertaking a 'walk-through'. Exemplary comments on pedagogical points are shared with teachers and are leading to the creation of a repertoire of effective learning methods from which teachers draw, mostly appropriately. At present, however, these valuable interventions are less often directed to matters of subject content. Practice of teachers' observation of each other is developing, but is not yet a fully established feature of the school.

The school is an orderly and inviting place. Communication is swift and effective, routines are observed efficiently and everyone is greeted warmly. The principal has given great priority to ensuring that the tone of the school is productive.

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.

Because of the value the school places on self reflection, this is a highly effective aspect of its work, especially in providing for the needs of those students most in need of intervention and support. Plans for and achievement of this group are reviewed with care, and the impressive team of specialists is deployed with skill. The members of the cabinet lead the way by their diligence in monitoring, based on a thorough knowledge of the students and their needs. Many other members of staff are committed to continuous improvement, and to make their school an outstanding one. There is a willingness to listen, to adapt and to innovate. The school is increasingly adept at diagnosing where problems need to be tackled, and to make interim adjustments in order to be sure of attaining its goals. It has a strong set of priorities already set out in its Comprehensive Education Plan, although it does not yet use this consistently as a working document to guide all staff.

The curriculum is kept under close review, and programs are scrutinized to ensure comprehensive coverage of the topics required for students' success. For example, there has been a conscious injection of more phonics in the early years in order to ensure that students learn how to decode confidently. The curriculum for the most advanced students is also subject to re evaluation: this is an area for continued attention, in order to ensure that students with particular gifts or talents are given full opportunity to pursue these.

The newly formed cabinet, working with the school leadership team and other key groupings in the school, now has the opportunity to build confidently on what has been established in order to provide curricular experiences and opportunities which are fully directed at the school's goals for accelerated learning.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Walter Francis Bishop School [PS 160]	∅	✓	+
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	