



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Lyndon B Johnson School**

**Public School 223**

**125-20 Sutphin Boulevard  
Queens  
NY 11434**

**Principal: Mrs Deborah Otto**

**Dates of review: May 25 and 29, 2007**

**Reviewer: David Scott**

# Content of the report

## **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

## **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

## **Part 3: Main Findings**

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

## **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Lyndon B Johnson is a large elementary school with 660 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school's population is made up of 83% Black and 10% Hispanic students, 5% from Asian and other backgrounds and 2% White students. The proportion of students with special educational needs is 20% and 5% are English language learners. The school receives Title 1 funding for just over 80% of its students. All grades except grade 5 have a gifted class, known as 'ASTRE', the composition of which is determined by the Region. Attendance is improving and, at just under 93%, is now almost in line with the average for City and similar schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The recently appointed principal gives outstanding leadership to the school and has quickly gained the full confidence of staff, students and parents.
- Through rigorous self-evaluation, the school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and the actions needed to secure further improvements.
- All of the professionals from the related health, psychological, guidance and social services work closely together as a team in order to maximize student inclusion.
- Data about student performance is used well to determine interventions and is contributing to the gradual upward trend in test results.
- The curriculum is broad, rich and stimulating, with a strong core knowledge base.
- The students are conscientious, focused and enthusiastic learners who feel valued and respond positively to the high expectations of staff.
- Staff work collaboratively as a very committed and innovative group of professionals reflected in the stimulating classroom environments and the meticulous collation of assessment data.
- Partnership with parents and the local community is becoming a significant strength due to recent initiatives such as workshops and social events.
- Effective programs are in place to raise the performance of special education students and English language learners.
- The program of professional development supports effectively the needs of individual teachers and the school's targets for raising student achievement.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop a consistent approach to the recording and use of student data, for example in planning for differentiation.
- Involve students more closely in the assessment of their own learning and personal goal setting.
- Gather further evidence of trends in, and impact on, the performance of all groups of students.
- Organize and realign the Comprehensive Education Plan into a more manageable, focused and useful working document which leads the school forward.
- Ensure that professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is a proficient school with well-developed features.**

The principal was appointed at the beginning of the 2006–2007 academic year and her outstanding leadership in creating a cohesive staff team and continuing raising student attainment is a major factor in taking the school forward. Lyndon B Johnson strives to be an inclusive school and all the related services of health, social work, counseling and psychological guidance collaborate and share information so that all students' needs are met. Data about students' academic performance is used effectively to determine intervention strategies at individual, group and whole-school levels. The curriculum is permeated by the Core Knowledge-Cultural Literacy model, a thematic-based, interrelating and sequential program that builds knowledge into all subjects. Life skills are also taught such as caring, courage, perseverance and co-operation; these play an important part in developing the whole child.

Students take pride in their work, collaborate with and help their peers, and are respectful of each other's views and cultures. The students' opinions are valued and shared in a range of contexts, for example, through their representation on the nutritional committee which looked at ways of improving school lunches. The school uses objective and standards-based data very effectively to track individual student progress and to benchmark grades but is aware of the need for further analysis to detect trends and impact in relation to gender, ethnic and other sub groups. Student data is not always used to drive staff professional development decisions. The teachers are very committed and innovative in their ideas and practices, producing imaginative environments for learning and taking their students to many places of interest in the immediate locality and in New York.

### 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.**

Appropriate use is made of the data from State and City tests to ensure a good understanding of the students' performance each year. In addition, the school uses a range of commercial diagnostic assessments alongside its own measures of student progress, all of which are carefully maintained and presented in portfolios. Teachers use this available data to understand each student's achievements and to identify the next steps in the learning. The students are not fully involved in this process to the extent that they learn how to assess their own progress and set goals for themselves. Detailed record sheets monitor students' progress in English language arts and mathematics. Teachers create and use rubrics extensively in these subjects, applying them to pieces of students' work which are displayed for the whole class.

The school uses the data from its own assessments to compare the progress of individual students across grades and classes and to put suitable instructional programs in place. This has been particularly effective with special education students and English language learners. Test data is also analyzed to help the school to evaluate how well different groups of students have performed and to compare whole-school achievement with previous years and with similar schools. Comparisons between subjects have been made and a much higher proportion of students in all grades achieve level 3 and level 4 in mathematics than in English language arts. Reading has become a very high priority for the school as a result of this discrepancy which also takes into consideration the fact that teachers are allowed to read the mathematics test questions to the students which they are unable to in English. The school has the data to undertake an analysis of the performance and progress of ethnic, gender and high achievement groups but does not yet do so. The school is aware of this and is planning to take action to add these groups.

**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 well developed.**

The commitment of the administration and teachers to setting interim and long term goals for student performance and to identify the steps needed to realize these goals is central to the school’s recent success in improving achievement levels overall. In addition to the ASTRE gifted classes in most grades, the school has identified an A class in each grade. The other classes in each grade are heterogeneous. The careful individual tracking system identifies those students on target to reach their goals and those who require additional support. Instructional team meetings, additional intervention support meetings and the pupil personnel team constantly review student progress and ensure that services and interventions are targeted accordingly. Staff use their excellent knowledge of the students and their family backgrounds to identify specific needs and corrective or preventative actions. Individualized education plans for the special education students who are organized into small, dedicated classes are documents which accelerate progress through identifying key goals and how to achieve them. Extended-day provision and other after-school programs are arranged to help them to catch up in specific aspects of learning. Attention is also given to borderline students who, with extra support, could reach the next grade level.

Parents are given information with their children’s reports to help them to understand the scores and graphs presented. Regular meetings between parents and teachers help parents to understand how they can support their children’s academic progress. The parents’ report rapidly improved communications with the school over the past year as a result of the principal’s philosophy and also the active work of the parent co-ordinator. Workshops on instructional matters such as solving problems in mathematics have enhanced parents’ knowledge about programs and what is expected of their children. They have also been given calendars of class and grade assignments so that they can support preparation and home-based work. The wider community is involved through charity fund-raising events and the seeking of support from local politicians, one of whom brought in funding for additional computer technology.

**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 well developed.**

The curriculum is very broad and rich, comprising a strong focus on reading, writing and mathematics with an emphasis on art, music and physical education. These and all of the other subjects are underpinned by a Core Knowledge program which usually becomes an overarching theme for the class or grade. For example, Ancient Egyptians provided a context for the development of a range of subject-specific skills in the first grade. The creation of a life-size ‘mummy’ and a range of other artifacts stimulated students’ imagination and contributed to exceptionally high levels of engagement and achievements. Learning through game situations and real-life situations is another consistent feature, for example mathematics when problem solving linked to predictions of the finalists in the ‘American Idol’ television competition. Curriculum maps are evaluated at regular intervals and interim adjustments are made in response to interrogation of assessment data. The considerable emphasis on guided reading is an example of this: teachers are expert in conferencing students and drawing their attention to key aspects of genre and grammar in a variety of carefully chosen texts. Student data is used to create at least three ability groups in each class. Teachers have preparation time each day and work together to plan instruction that meets the needs of most learners leading to effective differentiation. However, students are not always involved in assessing their own work on a regular basis, especially in subjects covered by the Princeton Review, Wilson and Voyager programs which are strong on teacher assessment and testing but leave less scope for self-assessment.

Budgeting and staffing decisions are highly consistent with the schools’ goals. Staff deployment and scheduling are well focused by the school’s data analysis, especially for students with additional needs. The personal development of students is given much attention and they trust the adults who work with them. Attendance is given a high priority, with good attendance celebrated and rewarded.

**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.**

In less than 12 months the principal has earned a very high degree of respect in the school and wider community. She has a strong philosophical conviction that all students should achieve to the best of their abilities and any obstacles to this goal have to be removed. All students are valued and those with physical disabilities or learning difficulties are provided with high quality resources and interventions that are necessary for them to succeed. New staff have to share the commitment to excellence and to demonstrate that they have the skills necessary to deliver high quality instruction. The consistent quality of the instruction is testimony to the effectiveness of this process. Classroom observations use a proforma which identifies criteria for, and seeks evidence of, active teaching and active learning. The latter includes the modeling of critical thinking and the use of higher order questions based on Bloom’s Taxonomy which is effective and promotes academic rigor. The principal has a considered strategy for improving the work of each teacher and there are inter-visitations.

Instructional teams, including mathematics and literacy coaches provide good support and model effective practice. The arrangements for professional development are sound and expertise is often found in-house but can also be bought in when necessary, for example, in conjunction with the purchase of a new reading scheme. The impact of professional development is monitored by the administration. The school is very well organized and runs smoothly because of the attention given to careful supervision and the clarity of the written procedures.

**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.**

The principal is still developing systems and structures for frequent interim evaluation, monitoring and review of student progress and adapting instruction to reflect need. The Comprehensive Education Plan has traditionally guided the school improvement process but it is a very detailed document which is not conducive to catching interim evaluations linked to the adjustment of goals where that is necessary. A shorter, more accessible working document is necessary to achieve that objective and to make the school's priorities and actions more easily communicated to staff and parents. The administration plans to reappraise the goals after an end-of-year overall evaluation of data and the performance of classes, grades and individual students. This will be an important prerequisite to evaluating the overall effectiveness of the curriculum and instructional programs to see whether these need to be adjusted or replaced. The school's long-term goals highlight small incremental increases in English language arts and mathematics which focus on raising the proportion of students expected to reach the standards each year. A small increase in English language arts was achieved in 2007 and it is expected that mathematics will also improve further, albeit from a higher baseline.

The administration and the academic intervention and pupil personnel teams meet regularly to scrutinize assessment data and to discuss the effectiveness of the delivery of instructional programs. Teachers are involved in the discussions and take appropriate actions. All of the procedures in place accelerate the learning of special education students, English language learners and those who are borderline and who, with help, could get to the next level in their grade.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Lyndon B Johnson (PS 223)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			X

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	