



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI

Middle School 282

**8-21 Bay 25th Street
Queens
NY 11691**

Principal: Peter J. Dalton

Dates of review: May 10 - 11, 2007

Reviewer: Jean Mackie

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

The Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI is located in Far Rockaway, Queens. It is a new school, having opened in September 2006, and has an enrollment of 74 cadets in grade 6. As part of its distinctive features, the school has an Air Force theme. Students are referred to as cadets and the 74 cadets are grouped into three squadrons. The teachers are referred to as professors. The school population comprises approximately 78% Black, 12% Hispanic, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander and 3% White cadets. The school has no special education students and one English language learner. The attendance rate, at approximately 97%, ranks the school as second in the Region and 30th in the City for the year to date.

The school is part of the network of Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy schools and is modeled after the Knowledge is Power Preparatory Academy in the Bronx. It is planned as a grade 6 through 8 school and will be admitting new cadets over the next two years. The school is eligible for Title 1 funding. It shares a building with two local high schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's drive and vision have been instrumental in quickly establishing a well-run school from its inception a little under a year ago.
- Staff, cadets and parents share the core values of the school and are working hard to achieve them.
- The school collects a wide range of data on individual cadets enabling it to track and monitor their progress on a regular basis.
- The dedicated professors employ a good range of instructional strategies which capture the interest and imagination of the cadets.
- Data is used well to identify cadets at risk so that appropriate intervention strategies can be provided for them.
- Daily routines are well established and underpin the strong focus on learning and mutual respect within the school.
- Cadets enjoy school, feel safe and secure and respond well to the high expectations of them.
- Good opportunities are provided for cadets to take on roles of responsibility, which effectively support their personal and social development.
- The school has placed a strong emphasis on professional development which is well focused on the current and future needs of this expanding school.
- A good range of clubs, including chess, dance, music, technology and journalism, provide additional breadth to the core curriculum.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish a manageable system for storing the increasing volume of data so that it is easy to access and manipulate in order to give rapid information about the relative performance of different groups of cadets.
- Continue to support staff in the use of data to inform planning and refine their approaches to differentiated instruction.
- Build on the current assessment procedures to ensure consistency of practice as the school and faculty grow.
- Establish a clear program for the implementation and monitoring of the impact of recent professional development, particularly in relation to the introduction of the Understanding by Design program, on cadet outcomes.
- Build on the collaborative approach to developing the Comprehensive Education Plan by ensuring that there is a common understanding of the processes involved and the use of assessment data to set challenging long term goals.
- Establish interim goals within the Comprehensive Education Plan which will enable the school to monitor its progress towards the longer term goals more effectively.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The clear vision and energy of the principal have been the driving force behind the establishment of this well-ordered and thriving new school. He is ably supported by the staff who all share his commitment and enthusiasm. The strong focus on developing well-rounded individuals is reflected in the high academic expectations and the mutual respect between cadets and adults. Cadets respond well to the responsibilities they are given through, for example, peer mediation and the leadership roles within the squadrons. Teaching is often lively and engaging. Professors are eager to develop their instructional techniques and value the professional development provided, which is well focused on the needs of the school. There is extensive data on individuals, but it is not, at present in a form which can be easily manipulated to give important strategic information about progress of specific groups. Positive steps have been taken to construct the Comprehensive Education Plan although knowledge and expertise about the process is still developing.

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 cadet knows and is able to do and to monitor cadet progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

In a short period of time, the school has built up an extensive range of data which enables it to track and monitor the progress of individual cadets and the English language learner on a regular basis. Information collected includes, for example, State tests, interim and diagnostic assessments. This data is scrutinized carefully by staff so that they have a clear picture of the achievements of the cadets and the progress that they are making. Test results on entry to the school and other qualitative information was used to inform the original groupings for the squadrons and identify the starting points of the cadets. Additional assessments were undertaken early to consolidate the understanding of the cadets' achievement levels and hence to inform curriculum planning. Analysis of diagnostic tests has also supported planning as it identified weaknesses in key skill areas, such as inferencing, for example.

Analysis of interim assessment data at squadron level, plus other qualitative observations within classrooms, was used to regroup the cadets in February in order to promote more effective learning for all. Data is used well to identify cadets at risk so that appropriate intervention strategies can be provided for them. A small group of cadets with scores mainly below 65 were identified and targeted for an intensive support program, for example.

Professors use State rubrics for assessment purposes and modify them appropriately to fit the specific curriculum context. There is much discussion about assessment but there is not yet a formalized system to ensure consistency of expectations across content areas, which will be particularly important as the school grows. Nevertheless, data is used systematically to monitor progress at subject level.

Given the early stages of the school, it is not possible for it to compare its performance with those in similar circumstances. Much of the data collected is paper based, which makes it difficult for the school to easily take a strategic overview of performance or to track the relative performance of squadrons and specific sub groups such as ethnicity or gender.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each cadet’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and cadet and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each cadet’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The high aspirations for cadet achievement and personal development underpin the work of the principal and staff. For this first year, the long term goals set were identified in the concept paper used to establish the school and based on achievements that had been made in similar Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academies. Given the prior achievement of the cadets, these have proved to be rather modest. Professors have, however, used their knowledge of current progress and achievement levels within their subjects to identify provisional goals for next year that are more aspirational.

The achievement data and additional information about the cadets has been used carefully by the school to realign the squadrons. The school also used the information to identify sub groups within each squadron in terms of their relative capacity to work independently. This has enabled the professors to more effectively meet the needs of the cadets. Data is used regularly to inform the additional interventions required for certain individuals. Weekly discussions between the guidance counselor, staff developer and professors about cadets at risk ensure that their particular needs are met. This could be through focused support during enrichment sessions and/or Saturday morning programs, for example. The small group of cadets, (all boys with scores mainly below 65) who received intensive support and guidance for an eight week period, all showed improvements in achievement as a result.

The individual attention that each cadet receives means that they are very clear about the high expectations that the school has for them regarding both work and behavior. They are eager to do their very best. Parents are similarly well informed and committed to ensuring that their children are successful. Parents appreciate the regular feedback on their child’s progress and play an active part in supporting their learning. The whole school community shares the core values of the school and is working hard to achieve them.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and cadet engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each cadet.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has established a curriculum which is appropriately in line with State requirements and has a strong focus on developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Interim assessments have been used systematically to identify any overall weaknesses in cadets’ skills and this information has been used well to adjust the curriculum. Professors have planned collaboratively to reinforce these skills across the

different content areas. A good range of clubs, including chess, dance, music, technology and journalism, provide additional breadth to the core curriculum.

The professors are committed to their cadets and aware of their accountability for the progress that they make. They employ a good range of instructional strategies which capture the interest and imagination of the cadets, who respond enthusiastically. Data is used regularly to group the cadets according to the task in hand. Differentiation is often achieved by grouping cadets of differing capabilities so that higher achieving cadets can support those with greater needs. The use of data to inform a more sophisticated approach to matching work to the range of needs in the squadron is still in the process of development.

The principal has established a clear action plan to underpin the essential features required to establish the school. His systematic approach and attention to detail has ensured that the budgetary and staffing decisions taken have been well matched to the needs of the cadets. Staffing appropriately covers the core curriculum, clubs and the additional support required by some individuals. Scheduling has been carefully aligned to the aspirations for the cadets through, for example, the blocked time for literacy and numeracy and the extended days during each week.

The small close community ensures that each cadet is well known by all. Daily routines are well-established and underpin the strong focus on learning and mutual respect within the school. Cadets feel safe and secure. They are comfortable about approaching staff with any concerns and value the support that they receive from them. The high attendance reflects the commitment of both parents and cadets to the school. It remains a high priority, with a prominent display of daily figures and any absentees. There are clear incentives for good attendance and rigorous procedures for following up any absences or tardiness.

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 cadet.

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

The principal's drive and vision have been instrumental in quickly establishing a well-run school from its inception a little under a year ago. He is highly respected by all for his achievements in such a short time and shows strong capacity to secure further change and development as the school grows. He was clear from the outset about the qualities of the staff he wanted to hire and used rigorous procedures during the recruitment process. As a result, he has a dedicated team of professors who are able to motivate cadets, have high expectations and are reflective practitioners. They are eager to develop their use of data to inform their practice.

Professional development is a very strong feature of the school. Needs have been carefully identified through the analysis of data; and frequent discussions between the principal, staff developer and the professors. Much of the professional development has been undertaken by the staff developer who has provided well-focused individual and group support on strategies for co-operative learning and differentiation, for example. In addition, the school has held two retreats, the first of which provided good opportunities for new staff to meet the current professors. The second focused on introducing the 'Understanding by Design' model of instruction to support the school in developing a more consistent approach to planning, assessment and differentiation. This was led by the principal's mentor from the Leadership Academy, who has provided invaluable support for

him and the school. At present, the school's plans for implementation and evaluation of this program are embryonic and lack some of the detail which will be required to ensure that it is successful in raising achievement.

The professors, who value the guidance and training offered to them, are quick to try out new ideas. Although it has not been possible to create common planning time this year, they are frequently discussing and evaluating their practice. There is a high level of professional discussion. Feedback from the regular classroom observations undertaken by the principal and staff developer, plus the intervisitations that take place, all contribute well to the honing of instructional skills and expertise. There are close links with Replications Incorporated, who have provided support to ensure that the school develops in line with the Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy educational model. Additional links have also been made with the high school, FDA VI, which has provided additional instructional expertise in physical education.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each cadet'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.

A good start has been made in the preparation of next year's Comprehensive Education Plan, which is the first for this school. The principal has adopted a collaborative approach by asking professors to identify goals and to develop supporting action plans for next year. Appropriate steps have been taken to guide the staff in this process and they have willingly undertaken the task. Preliminary drafts indicate that their understanding of what is required and their use of data to set realistic but challenging long-term goals is variable and not yet fully secure. Interim goals, which would help the school to track progress towards the longer term goals more easily, are also not clearly established. The principal is aware of this and has planned further support to assist this process. It is intended that parents will have a stronger role in planning next year as the school grows and systems are more firmly embedded.

The close-knit professional community means that the work of the school is continually under review. The administration meets regularly, with clearly minuted meetings identifying where action is required and the impact of steps taken. Data is used well to inform both these and other meetings that take place to review the progress of the cadets overall and individually. As a result, changes have been made, for example, to the allocation of cadets to squadrons, the curriculum and instructional practice. Intervention programs have been well targeted and led to improvements in achievement, behavior and self esteem. In addition to the formal meetings, there are frequent informal discussions which contribute to any decisions about realigning practice or structures. This continual reflection on what is working well and what requires improvement means that the principal and his team have a good understanding of the school and can react flexibly to any changes that may be required as a result of evaluation.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Knowledge and Power Preparatory Academy VI (MS 282)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each cadet knows and is able to do and to monitor cadet 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 cadet, 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 cadets* 		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 cadets, 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 cadet's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and cadet and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each cadet'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 cadet, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of cadets 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 cadets in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to cadets and parents/caregivers. Cadets and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each cadet'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 cadet performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, cadets, 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 cadet engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each cadet.	∅	✓	+
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 Professors are accountable for improving instruction and cadet outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by cadet data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each cadet's and group of cadets' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by cadet data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each cadet's and group of cadets' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by cadet data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each cadet's and group of cadets' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of professor and cadet time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining cadet data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve cadet outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage cadets.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect cadets and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each cadet knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Cadet 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 cadet.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for cadet 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 cadet data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each cadet's and group of cadets' 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 cadet 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 professor's instruction. Professors frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving cadet 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 cadet'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 cadet 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 cadet academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	