



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

John Driscoll School

Public School 016

**80 Monroe Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10301**

Principal: Vincenza Gallassio

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Reviewer: John Collings

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

John Driscoll School is an elementary school with 1070 students ranging from pre-K through grade 5. The population is made up of approximately 15% White students, 30% Black, 40% Hispanic and the remainder are Asian and others. Thirty seven different languages are spoken. English language learners represent 25% of the school's population and 10% are special education students. Over 86% of students are Title 1 eligible which is average for similar schools but higher than City schools. Student attendance is 92% which is average for similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school makes effective use of existing data to identify where there are inconsistencies in student performance.
- The school has made a very good start in identifying the progress of different groups of students.
- The school has created its own effective system for analyzing data and student progress.
- The school compares data well with similar schools to identify how successful it is.
- Teachers are held accountable for the instruction in their classes and their students' progress.
- Students really enjoy school, want to learn, feel involved and are fully engaged in lessons.
- Procedures for appointing staff ensure staff are fully certified and very conversant in the use of data to aid instruction.
- Members of the cabinet frequently observe classes and give very good feedback to teachers.
- Model lessons and coaching supports teachers in differentiating their teaching to meet the range of abilities in their classes.
- The principal is respected by all and has effected significant improvements since her appointment.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the current model of data analysis in English language arts and mathematics to include other subjects.
- Build on the effective data analysis implemented so far to compare more extensively the progress between subjects, grades, classes and groups of students.
- Develop systems to involve students more actively in recognizing goals and what they need to do to improve.
- Use data more effectively to ensure that higher attaining students are being sufficiently challenged.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

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

Since the principal was appointed some three years ago, student performance has steadily improved year on year and the school has recently been recognized as one of the most improved in the district. The school is increasingly using data to identify where to improve and therefore where it needs to direct its resources most productively. The school recognizes that the very good systems that it has for analyzing data could be used much more widely across the school in order to raise student performance further. Leadership is strong and there is a very clear direction for the school which is reflected in the Comprehensive Education Plan. This commitment is also reflected across the cabinet and consequently in the teaching staff and the enjoyment of students in learning.

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.

The school has used available data effectively and has developed its own systems. Through the effective use of these systems it has identified a weakness in English, language, arts by analyzing the outcomes of the Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System phonics strand. The school attributes the overall improvement in performance in English language arts to date to the increased use of phonics. It is currently developing systems to monitor the impact of more focused phonics teaching on the performance and progress of students, classrooms and grade levels.

The school's effective use of data has identified areas in greatest need of improvement. A current focus is on English language learners because these students have been identified as not performing as well as they could. Special education students are appropriately supported and the school makes strenuous efforts to address the wide ethnic mix and large number of languages spoken. There is also a focus on phonics across the school because this has been identified as significantly in need of improvement. Using the data the school has also identified, that some higher achieving students, although within the expected level 3 and above within a grade, do not always make the progress they should. As a result the school is emphasizing the necessity to challenge higher achieving students through differentiated instruction in classrooms.

The school uses State data and other available information to compare itself with similar schools. Data demonstrates that when compared with its own past performance it is one of the most improved schools in the district.

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.

As identified above the school uses data well to show where the greatest need lies within the school. This is very clearly reflected in the Comprehensive Education Plan, which identifies medium and long-term goals. The school sets time frames, and in many cases clear criteria, against which it measures success. The school recognizes that measurement of success needs to be clearer in some areas for example, the progress of different groups of students from one year to the next.

Goals and plans are well structured to reflect whole school issues, such as, progress of English language learners and in phonics. The school is aware through the use of data of where individual students need support, and where there are particular strengths or a need for improvement in particular grades and classrooms. The school pays particular attention to those students in the greatest need, for example, the English language learners and special education students. As a result the school has classes where first language English students are taught in Spanish and vice versa. Special education students are very well supported through 'push-ins', 'pullouts' and special education classes. Consequently, these students are making significant progress.

High expectations are conveyed to students through the school's climate for learning evoked through strong leadership and the professionalism of staff. Students enjoy school, learning and the challenges offered. Despite its best effort, the school finds involving parents within the school difficult, particularly across the ethnic minorities. However, the school is trying to address this, for example through parental workshops. There are also a number of parents who are involved with the management of the school and their views are taken into account when planning long-term goals. One of these goals is to improve parental participation beyond the standard parental conferences.

Goal setting and plans for improving student performance and progress are central to all members of the school community. The principal is a very effective leader who is central to inspiring and enabling all within the community to make their contribution and to recognize that improving the progress of its students is of the highest priority.

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.

The school has created a very clear curriculum map that interprets the mandated curriculum rigorously. This results in teachers being very clear about what their students need to learn. Teachers are held accountable for their students' progress increasingly through the use of data, to identify whether the students in their care have made the expected, better or worse progress from one grade to the next. The curriculum map includes required assessments, resources, State Standards addressed and professional development to ensure that it is fully implemented. The result has been that staffing and budgeting are being heavily focused on enabling staff to differentiate their instruction effectively and particularly in the development of differentiated group teaching. Teachers have therefore been given significant autonomy within their classrooms to differentiate instruction to ensure it meets the needs of the students. As a result teachers feel

empowered to create programs of learning that best suit the needs of their student and this is reflected in the increased performance of the school over the last three years.

Care over scheduling not only ensures that students' best interests are met but that teachers are given opportunities for professional development, for example, to watch model lessons to improve their skills in differentiated instruction and also to work in each other's classrooms. A good example of this has been English language arts teachers and science teachers working together to raise the performance in science and to encourage literacy to be used more effectively across the curriculum.

There is a good level of respect between staff and students and staff are keen to ensure students make good academic and personal progress. The school recognizes the need to involve students in setting their own goals to make sure they know how to improve. Students are fully engaged and concentrate very well because of the school's very effective programs and good instruction. They enjoy school; want to learn, and to do their very best. As a result of this and of the best efforts of the school in developing strategies to reduce student absence, attendance has risen.

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.

Good leadership selects teachers of the highest quality by ensuring they are all fully certificated, interviewed before appointment and, during the interview, are expected to give a demonstration lesson. Staff are also expected to demonstrate that they can use data to inform their instruction and are fully committed to differentiated instruction to ensure all students make the best possible progress regardless of their prior attainment.

Professional development is well focused on the priorities of the school, derived directly from the use of data. As a result, the current focus in the school is to concentrate on helping teachers to interpret data to create lessons that include a range of expectations to meet the learning needs of different groups of students. The reason for this continued focus is that data has demonstrated students' performance has risen as a result of introducing this method of teaching. Good use is made of the support by coaches, modeled lessons, 'lunch and learn' sessions and teachers working collaboratively in each other's classrooms to effect this change. Teachers think it is, 'the best professional development we've had'.

The principal and assistant principals observe classroom teaching not only formally, but also informally. Information from these observations is discussed between the cabinet and teachers and is used very well to identify best practice and to share this through professional development. The opinions of the principal and assistant principals are respected and their comments are seen as ways of improving instruction for the best interest of the students.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is reviewed regularly, particularly when results of tests are known. The school consequently evaluates those results and the effectiveness of the strategies it has put in place. Such review and analysis has confirmed that the increased student performance has been due to the use of data to differentiate instruction more effectively. The school's strategy is now to implement this style of instruction more comprehensively.

Conversations with staff, students and parents confirm a view that the principal is very effective and highly respected and that the improvement in student performance has been due to her leadership and her ability to effect change.

The school runs smoothly and encompasses a strong climate for learning, in which students behave very well, are polite and talk easily with visitors. Youth development and support services are well aligned to the school's goals and it has made many links with the local community. It has been particularly successful in obtaining significant funding for its new library.

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 school's Comprehensive Education Plan is reviewed regularly at approximately two monthly intervals to coincide particularly with the results of assessments. Interim goals are identified but the criteria by which these are evaluated are not consistently applied. The reviews have identified the need for increased support for English language learners and to ensure higher attaining students make the progress they should.

Reviews have also resulted in the continuation of the school's commitment to differentiated instruction and the use of how well a student has progressed from one year to the next as a measure of how well the school, grade, class or student is doing. This type of measure shows that the school is significantly more successful than current State measures would indicate. However the school recognizes that although the data analysis it has initiated has been very effective so far, it could be used more effectively to compare subject, grades, classes and groups of students and be more responsive to student need. Plans have recently been revised to improve the data systems to give a more sophisticated review of student progress and consequently to refine instruction more precisely to student needs.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: John Driscoll School (PS16)	∅	✓	+
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	