



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Francisco Oller School**

**Community School 61**

**1550 Crotona Park East  
Bronx  
NY 10460**

**Principal: Patricia Quigley**

**Dates of review: October 23 – 25, 2006**

**Reviewer: Shân Pinna-Griffith**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Francisco Oller School serves 384 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The student population is approximately 65% Hispanic, 35% Black, with very small numbers of students from other groups. The number of English language learners is 30 (7%) and has gradually decreased since 2003. The percentage of special education students (just under 10%) has gradually increased over the last three years. Attendance, at 94%, is higher than in similar schools and also higher than the City average.

The school serves a changing community due to a building program in the neighborhood, which is replacing high-rise apartment blocks with lower-density housing. Approximately 80% of the students are Title 1 eligible. This has gradually decreased since 2003 and currently stands lower than schools in similar circumstances, but higher than City schools. Student stability, at 92.2%, is slightly higher than similar schools, but comparable to the City average.

The school is located directly opposite Crotana Park, which provides students and staff with a natural resource on their doorstep.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has improved attendance from 91.7% in 2005 to 94% in 2006.
- There is some good teaching, with interactive lessons which use effective questioning techniques to challenge students' thinking.
- The school is beginning to make good use of educational technology.
- Funds have been used effectively to maintain smaller classes.
- The school has cultivated a productive partnership with the Children's Aid Society, which provides services before and after school.
- There are positive relationships between staff and students, who feel safe in school.
- Parents feel that the teachers are approachable and supportive when they need to discuss issues.
- Teachers have a sense of collegiality and mutual support.

### What the school needs to improve

- Improve the school's systems for and further develop staff expertise in the collection, analysis and use of data to guide the raising of achievement.
- Develop a more rigorous and consistent approach to monitoring the quality of instruction that will improve the quality of learning for all student groups.
- Improve the quality of differentiated instruction according to student learning need, including the needs of the higher-achievers.
- Involve students more actively in their own learning, knowing the purpose and goals for each lesson and how they can improve their work.
- Develop a matrix for target-setting and tracking student progress from pre-kindergarten to grade 5.
- Set measurable long-term and interim goals for school improvement, particularly the raising of achievement, with plans of how these will be met with timescales, use performance data to evaluate progress against these goals, and adapt plans accordingly.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is an undeveloped school.**

The school places a great emphasis on providing an environment where the whole student is well cared for, both socially and emotionally. It is successful in this aspect of its work. Relationships between staff, students and parents are positive and supportive. Students feel safe and enjoy attending school.

The school has not paid the same attention to the academic progress of the students and it is for this reason that some aspects of its work have been graded undeveloped. The new leadership team was formed in September 2006 and is beginning to come to terms with the need to raise student achievement.

There are some structures in place, in an embryonic stage of development, which will support the administration in their work on monitoring instruction. There are others, such as the in-house provision of professional development, which can be further developed to ensure the learning needs of all students are addressed appropriately.

### 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 undeveloped.**

There are many different ways data is collected in the school, but the data are not presented as a coherent package that staff can understand and effectively use on a regular basis to monitor student progress. Continual teacher assessment of students, supported by the State test results, is not yet integrated into the school's systems. Data show that student achievement in both English language arts and mathematics is significantly below that of similar schools and as well as the City average. In 2006, the percentage of students in grade 4 attaining only level 1 on the State tests increased in both English language arts and mathematics. However, the school does not yet use data in a meaningful way to address this decline.

The school does not use data to identify the difference in performance between boys and girls. 2006 data show that boys significantly outperformed girls in both English language arts and mathematics. The school has set percentage targets for improvement, but has not translated this into the identification of how many students this means, who they are and the specialized support program they will receive.

Data is well used to identify English language learners and special education students and the school provides them with additional targeted support in an attractive and well-equipped learning environment.

Staff expertise in interpreting data to raise achievement in all grades, and address achievement gaps, is at an embryonic stage. Currently there are no effective systems in place for target-setting and tracking of student progress against their targets from pre-

kindergarten to grade 5. The needs of potentially higher-achieving students throughout the school are not sufficiently addressed.

**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 undeveloped.**

A new leadership team has been in place since September 2006, when an assistant principal for the younger grades joined the principal and assistant principal for grades 3 through 5. The leadership team places a strong emphasis on a collaborative approach to planning, but acknowledges that teacher collaboration needs to be structured in a way that ensures consistency across grade groups and subjects. The school has goals and plans, but linking these to everyday learning and instruction in classrooms and the impact on standards is at an embryonic stage of development.

The school has a range of services for students in the greatest need of improvement. There are special mixed-grade classes and integrated classes for special education students in the lower and upper school. The school is justly proud of the special education students who successfully re-integrate into general education classes.

The school provides parents with a range of information throughout the year from curriculum coverage to grades and end-of-year report cards. The school’s recent self-evaluation pointed to low participation at parent conferences, in spite of a range of strategies to gain a higher attendance. Information gathered at both student and parent meetings suggests teachers and parents have different sets of expectations. In particular, students and parents do not feel that the more advanced students are sufficiently challenged.

Too many students are not actively involved in their own learning. They are not always sure of what they are learning and why and how they can improve their work. Teachers do not differentiate instruction sufficiently to impact on student outcomes. Insufficient attention is paid to students who are already performing at a high level.

**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 staff has worked in collaboration to customize the English language arts and mathematics curriculum to the school needs. In line with good practice, staff now review and update these plans on an annual basis. Where better teaching is seen, the lessons are well planned and interactive, with appropriate pace, challenge and use of effective questioning techniques to support the students’ thinking process. There is not enough consistency across the school of this quality of differentiation and alignment of the curriculum to the needs of students at all levels. Systems for comparing the performance of different groups, classes and grades are undeveloped, and thus the accountability of teachers for their students’ performance is not well established.

The principal has been effective in her use of the budget to reduce class size throughout the school. She also uses it to run classes for special education students and to provide additional teacher and paraprofessional support in general education classes. The school has committed a considerable amount of money to the development of technology in the school, both in a computer lab and in small computer stations in classrooms. Classrooms are also equipped with overhead projectors. Students are actively engaged in lessons that involve the use of technology.

There are positive relationships between staff and children. Students feel safe in school and respected by staff. Parents feel that the teachers are approachable and supportive when they need to discuss issues. School leaders have worked hard to improve attendance, as they have identified this as an important first step in raising student achievement. They have successfully implemented systems that have been responsible for the improvement of average daily attendance from 91.7% in 2005 to 94% in 2006.

**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 school's traditional focus has been on the whole child, with great importance placed on their emotional and social development. Recent staffing appointments have been more focused on the specific expertise teachers bring to the school to improve teaching, learning and achievement.

The principal has recently developed an effective system for professional development directed by lead teachers at each grade level. For example, grade 5 teachers have used the technology lab to review the results of a social studies test; teachers at grades 3 and 4 have analyzed resources to extract information and interpret this from two differing points of view; and pre-kindergarten through grade 2 teachers have viewed a video and discussed effective ways to manage the new literacy initiatives in the classroom. Activities such as these have the potential to help teachers develop a deeper understanding of the quality of teaching and learning that will be required to improve student achievement. Teachers comment on the collegial atmosphere and support they received from each other during these sessions.

The principal observes classroom teaching and provides teachers with verbal and written feedback, identifying strengths and areas for development. She has successfully developed and tested out her own protocol for measuring instructional practices against specific criteria. This now needs to be fully implemented and used by all staff undertaking classroom observations.

The principal is respected and has the capacity to effect change. She has clear procedures for the day-to-day running of the school that are communicated to staff by email and through the bulletin board in the general office.

The school has an effective partnership with the Children's Aid Society which provides a range of services and activities before and after school. The school also provides work experience for students from the local high school.

**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 undeveloped.**

The school has a Comprehensive Education Plan and intervention strategies in place, but there are no school-wide procedures to enable instructional leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used and measure progress towards the goals.

The school collects data on students, and teachers use this to monitor students' progress in class. There is no overall system in place to monitor student progress across the grades, or to track their individual and class progress through the school.

The Comprehensive Education Plan has the potential to guide the development of curriculum and instruction. However, there is work to be done to ensure that teachers understand what they can be doing in the classroom to help the school reach the goals in the plan.

The principal does monitor the quality of classroom instruction, but this has not yet developed into a rigorous and consistent approach that will impact on achievement. In particular, too much classroom instruction is common to all students. Once it is sufficiently aligned to individual needs, it will allow students at different stages and achievement levels to work in ways that will accelerate their learning and improve their performance.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Francisco Oller School (PS 061)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>	<b>X</b>		

<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>	<b>X</b>		

\* 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>	<b>X</b>		

<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		