



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Dr Albert G. Oliver School

Public School 093

**1535 Story Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473**

Principal: Donald Mattson

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Reviewer: Dee Wheatley

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Information about the school

Public School 93, The Dr Albert G. Oliver School, is a pre-kindergarten through grade 5 elementary school located in the Soundview Park section of the Bronx. The student population has declined over the last three years owing to changes in enrollment zones. Further local re-organization of schools has led to the removal of grade 6, which was part of the school until this year. There are currently 470 boys and girls enrolled. Many of the students travel in from outside of the school zone by bus. The student population is ethnically diverse, with the main groups being Hispanic (49%), Black (48%) and other ethnic backgrounds. The number of recent immigrants has fallen this year and is well below the proportion in similar schools. Title 1 eligibility is below that of similar schools but well above the City average. Attendance is slightly above that of similar schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school runs smoothly on a daily basis with procedures and routines established appropriately.
- Relationships are positive throughout the school and behavior is generally good.
- The library is an excellent, well-used resource; the skilled librarian liaises well with teachers to promote reading and enquiry skills.
- The staff developers are skilled practitioners whose support is valued by teachers.
- The new AIS program is a significant improvement on last year's program but it needs careful monitoring to determine how sufficient and effective it is.
- The parent coordinator, with the enthusiastic support of the parent association, has established a rich program of events for parents.
- The after-school program is valued by students and parents.

What the school needs to improve

- The use of performance data is under-developed and is not yet making a difference to progress.
- A start has been made with monitoring progress in reading; however as yet the school is not in a position to track progress in writing.
- The teaching expectations are not high enough overall; there is a lack of pace and challenge and work is not sufficiently differentiated for the higher achievers.
- In English language learner classes, there are weaknesses in the match of work to ability and English language skills; resulting in expectations that are too low.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of instruction is not making sufficient impact in improving learning and reducing inconsistencies in teachers' practice.
- Restructuring of grade-level groupings after the loss of the 6th grade last year has not enabled sufficient flexibility to meet the range of students' needs.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school.

In day-to-day-terms, the school runs smoothly. Relationships are positive and routines are followed by the students as expected. The students generally like coming to school, and their behavior is satisfactory. Nonetheless, they could be helped to be more confident learners and provided with opportunities to exercise responsibility and leadership. Recent improvements have been made in academic intervention services for students operating below grade levels but this requires monitoring to ensure it is making enough difference in student achievement. The data about student performance has begun to be used to improve learning but there is much more to be done to strengthen this aspect of the school's work. An excellent library is used effectively to promote reading and inquiry. The school has improved its involvement with parents and the after-school program is valued by parents and students alike. The teaching is inconsistent in quality; there is some strong teaching but overall the expectations are not high enough, particularly in regard to higher achievers and English language learners. The systems for monitoring and evaluating quality and planning improvement are not well enough implemented at present to ensure continued improvement at the rate expected.

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

In the recent years the school has gathered considerable test data, which is regularly updated, in regard to English language arts and mathematics. Very recently the school has begun to use data regarding English language arts scores and reading levels to identify progress and to target students who are 'pushable,' particularly those who are on the border between levels 2 and 3. This is a positive move to begin to use data in a proactive way to improve learning. However, this approach is relatively new and teachers are not yet aligning it with their planning and instruction. Data is used appropriately to identify students with special needs and to provide them with individual education plans. Information from data is also used to identify class groupings of English language learners but this is not wholly effective in charting their individual progress and ensuring instruction optimizes their progress. Further, for the last two years relatively few students have achieved at level 4, yet the school has not targeted this nor focused explicitly on its higher achievers. Overall, while the school has moved some way in developing its use of data, as opposed to just gathering it for summative purposes, there is still much to be done to streamline its use and make it coherent with other systems in the school.

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

The Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) has goals which focus explicitly on achievement and progress. However, the quantitative targets are not based on actual data. This means that the targets are largely notional in nature. Although this is partly the consequence of the mandated timeframe for the CEP, the action plans within the CEP have not been updated to take account of current focus areas. The principal and assistant principals have rightly identified the weaknesses in writing as a development priority and have taken action to provide a more structured literacy program which guides teachers in the steps of best-practice literacy instruction. This has just started and impact has yet to be evaluated. Currently, the school is not in a position to track progress in writing. Monthly grade team planning meetings, which are led by the AP's, support consistency regarding mandated requirements and administrative matters. They are less systematic and effective in enabling staff to share data, link it to students' work and performance levels, and to develop strategies together to address weaknesses in learning.

Last year, academic intervention was delivered through the thirty-seven and a half minute program and was unsatisfactory, in part because many children are bused in and could not stay for the duration. This year, the school has provided extra time and has rescheduled the program for the morning, when students and teachers are fresh. Teachers and support staff have been trained in a range of intervention strategies and are deployed to provide individual and small-group support for identified students. This is a considerable improvement over last year and is leading to some carefully focused work, but it is too early to tell how much impact this will have, particularly since some of the instruction, particularly the independent small group work, is not yet satisfactorily matched to need. The school has a high proportion of students operating below grade level benchmarks and the indications are that the academic support service, while better than before, is not wholly sufficient. Careful monitoring will be required to gauge its effectiveness and to determine whether further support is needed, as either push-in or pull-out support for mainstream classes.

Expectations of parents and care-givers are satisfactory. A recently-appointed parent coordinator has considerably improved the links with parents through surveys and a lively program of responsive events. Plans to provide workshops that develop parents' knowledge and skills in supporting their children's learning have the potential to further support student learning.

Expectations of students could be higher. They are not sufficiently clear about their goals, some of which are very general, and are not active independent learners.

Overall, goals and plans for improving student performance do not yet effectively drive the combined activities of the school community because the key processes of monitoring and evaluation and data analysis are not sufficiently linked to planning, teaching and learning.

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 undeveloped

The school has improved the breadth of its curriculum over recent years and it is satisfactory overall. However, students can miss out on key aspects; for example, some bilingual students in 5th grade don’t currently have technology. There is no music specialist at present, despite good attempts by the school to secure one. The library is an excellent resource, the potential of which is fully realized by a skilled librarian. She provides a full program and works effectively with classroom teachers to develop reading and enquiry skills.

The teachers are committed and have warm relationships with students. Evidence shows that the teachers are working hard to provide detailed lesson plans but that they need more guidance in identifying, in their plans, the setting of learning objectives and in providing differentiated tasks for ability groups. A common planning template and some training could reduce the teachers’ work while sharpening the focus of this planning. There is some strong teaching in the school, for example, in grade 1, some students are making good progress in writing through focused teaching. However, overall, teachers’ expectations are not sufficiently high to optimize the learning of all groups. This particularly impacts on the higher achievers because there is insufficient pace and challenge for them. Higher-order questioning could more actively develop higher order thinking skills.

The teaching of English language learner students does not make enough use of English and the lessons lack pace. In addition, the progress of some students is being slowed by being retained in bilingual classes when their English fluency indicates they are ready for mainstream. The students are well behaved for the most part and engage appropriately in class, although many do not participate as actively as one might wish. More needs to be done to develop their confidence as learners; this might be accomplished through developing their questioning skills, the use of self and peer assessment, structured collaborative groupwork, and opportunities to take responsibility.

Owing to organizational changes in the region, the school lost its 6th grade last year, leading to a significant reduction in the budget and staffing. The budget is now very tight, and no academic support teachers are currently employed. The administrative team have not been sufficiently strategic in determining how to optimize the use of the budget and staffing to best meet the students’ needs. Keeping class sizes low across the board, the main strategy deployed, does not allow enough flexibility to cater well for the full range of needs; for example, some larger challenge classes offering well-paced teaching might enable more small groups and focused support elsewhere.

The students are positive about their school. They feel supported by their teachers. Relationships are good. However, currently there is no school council and too few opportunities for students to exercise leadership and responsibility. Attendance is in line with City schools.

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.

While, overall, the school is proficient in this area, there are some key weaknesses. Teachers and support staff are selected appropriately. However, the loss of some strong teachers through the re-organizational changes last year was felt deeply by the school. Professional support and modelling of lessons provided by the three staff developers are highly valued by the teachers but their deployment as substitute class teachers has limited their ability to support teachers this semester. Teachers need this support, and that provided by the two external consultants; particularly in literacy, as they become familiar with a new literacy program and hence other means of providing substitutes should be sought.

As indicated above, the grade team meetings, while satisfactory in some respects, require greater focus on addressing teaching and learning issues, thereby enhancing professional development and accountability. Currently, not all teachers are clear and confident in their matching of work to student performance levels and this issue has not yet been addressed in grade meetings. The teachers require regular opportunities to consider data about progress, match it with the scrutiny of student work and evidence from lesson monitoring to identify any students not making expected progress. By triangulating the evidence in this way, they can together decide on the best strategies for tackling weaknesses, put them into practice in the classroom, and evaluate their effectiveness.

The principal and AP's are respected. They ensure the school runs smoothly on a daily basis. Procedures and routines are clear and appropriately followed. However, the senior team could be more strategic in linking improvement processes to ensure greater consistency across the school. Although there is a planned lesson monitoring cycle by the principal and AP's, not all teachers have been monitored or received quality feedback in the way envisioned. Further, the senior leadership team do not extract common issues from lesson observations to be shared with all teachers in order to optimize their impact across the grades.

The school has done well to provide two after-school programs, including the sports and arts program and the Phipps Academy, all of which are valued by the parents and the students.

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 tracking of the progress of students with special educational needs is satisfactory. Revision of the academic intervention program was timely and an improvement on the previous program but its effectiveness has yet to be evaluated. Overall the school is at a relatively early stage in using data in a proactive way to improve teaching and learning. Currently, there is no established system for the handing on of data about progress from one grade to the next, which results in delay at the start of the academic year as teachers review work to establish a baseline for the grade. A strong improvement cycle has not

been established with data from a range of resources being used to evaluate progress and to identify further priorities and goals, for all the reasons indicated above. However, the school has started on the road and the principal and AP's are determined to develop further in this direction. Training for the senior team on how the improvement processes can be triangulated to best effect would help to strengthen and accelerate improvements.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Dr Albert G. Oliver (PS 093)	∅	✓	+
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		