



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Henry Bristow School

Elementary School 039

**417 6th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11215**

Principal: Anita de Paz

Dates of review: February 27 - 28, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Paul Smith

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Henry Bristow School is an elementary school with 347 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 36% White, 33% Hispanic, 25% Black and 4% students. The student body includes 6.4% English language learners and no special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.4%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has promoted a clear, shared vision among all members of the school community, which has had a positive effect on student learning.
- All teachers use data in a similar fashion to understand students' performance and monitor their progress.
- Teachers make changes to the curriculum appropriately, as they use data to good effect.
- Teachers consistently plan differentiated activities to meet varying needs and different learning styles in their class.
- The school has made very good use of rubrics to refine teachers' planning and assessment in math.
- There is a high level of effective collaboration across the school in planning student work.
- Teachers value the feedback from the principal's classroom observations as it provides a strong focus on improving instruction.
- Individually structured professional development draws on an accurate understanding of student learning and is successful in helping teachers to improve.
- Students consistently behave well because they are well motivated and enjoy their work.
- The school's high expectations consistently reflect in practice, leading to considerable success of all its students.

What the school needs to improve

- Complete and implement the planned curriculum review to embed understanding of the expected learning through each grade and subject.
- Regularly review student progress and set short-term, meaningful goals that build towards longer-term targets.
- Give parents more detailed information so they have a better understanding of their child's next step in learning.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Henry Bristow School has been quietly but effectively going through a period of change since the appointment of the new principal two years ago. Since the last Quality Review, the school has addressed all the issues raised. Professional development is now a real strength. There is a common system for the use of data throughout the school to monitor students' progress both within and between grades. Parents have noticed the changes in the improved communication by the school. In addition to the standard information and parents' handbook, the school sends monthly curriculum newsletters home and parent workshops are available. Parents are welcome into the school and are occasionally able to attend classes to see at first hand what their child is learning. "This is like night turning to day," as one parent remarked. However, the school does not yet give parents sufficiently detailed information to help them understand the next learning steps for their child.

The real change has occurred because of the vision of the principal and the work of the faculty to bring it to fruition. The aim that every child should reach their potential is a powerful goal, but the faculty has taken this into every aspect of their school. Small-group teaching, which makes differentiated instruction implicit, is central to this methodology and as teachers at the school are skilled in it, instruction is good. Teachers carefully track the progress of each student and intervention takes place quickly to ensure that they have the best possible means to overcome any difficulties. The inquiry team has been instrumental in investigating ways in which the curriculum may be adapted to suit the needs of some students better. This has been so successful that other subject areas have already replicated the methodology. However, the curriculum is not broken down sufficiently enough to enable the school to set specific and meaningful short-term goals for each student.

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 the student's progress over time.

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

Based on the continuous collection of data from formal assessment and less formal classroom observation, a comprehensive amount of student data is collected, collated

and analyzed. This identifies students' individual strengths and weaknesses, helps to plan changes in the curriculum and is a major element in successfully providing differentiated instruction. The school tracks the progress of individuals and groups rigorously. For example, the school identified that, while its lower performing students were progressing well, the progress of its higher achieving students had declined slightly. Therefore, the school identified their learning needs and put strategies in place to raise their performance in line with their abilities. The school takes appropriate and timely action if any group of students is making less progress than expected, as is the case with a small group of girls in math, seen to have the potential to benefit from additional, intensive instruction. The school carefully compares the progress of the small number of students with individual education plans (but who are not special education students) and English language learners with other groups. This has resulted in a "push-in", rather than a "pull-out" model of intervention and as a result, these students have full access to the curriculum, while making good progress.

Following extensive work by the principal and coaches, the school has instigated a common framework, understood and implemented by teachers both within and between grades. The teachers understand the power of such analysis, to the extent that they now automatically use data to plan their instruction on a daily basis, revising plans and jointly identifying which strategies have worked best with different groups of students. Additionally, teachers use the analysis to plan differentiated learning within a class. This extends to identifying students who already understand the work moving on to tasks that are more difficult, so adding to their engagement with and enjoyment of instruction. The membership of each group following a different level of work changes frequently, because teachers use the information available confidently, recognizing its importance.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

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

The school routinely and effectively uses standardized tests as well as numerous informal and formal assessments to measure students' progress. This enables teachers and leaders to project the complexity of work each student is capable of achieving in the future. These projections are stated in general, numerical terms for most students. Moving forward, more precisely defined projections will make progress checks against them more accurate. However, the students who have individual education plans have much more specific academic objectives, which are achievable and measurable for both the long and short term. The school passes on detailed assessment information for every child to the next years teacher so that goals may be set with regard to prior achievement. The school is particularly adept at identifying students whose performance is in greatest need of improvement. The inquiry team perceptively focused on those high-achieving students who were in danger of making less progress than their potential would suggest. Intensive work with these students has resulted in adaptations to teachers' planning to take into account their needs, such as extension materials for when work is completed.

Parents are very clear about, and support, the school's high expectations for their children's achievement. While the school currently provides parents with formal and informal assessment information twice a year in addition to report cards, more detailed

information would assist them in giving their children more targeted support. The school's "open door" policy encourages parents to ask questions of teachers and the principal and builds mutual trust between them. This in no small way accounts for the growing reputation of the school in the local area.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

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

The school organizes Instruction in small-group work. This allows teachers to differentiate tasks, to stretch their students by just the right amount to engage them without discouraging them. Consequently, students concentrate on their work, allowing the teacher to give intense instruction to each of the groups in turn. The membership of these groups is constantly changing to account for the different achievement levels in a specific area and the different learning styles of the students. Instruction is good as the teachers are skilled in setting interesting tasks, which the students enjoy.

Differentiation underpins all the school does and teachers believe it raises achievement. Teachers always set students tasks according to their achievement level. However, math is setting a precedent by producing an integrated rubric of mathematical concepts through all the grades, by which they differentiate. There are a wide range of enrichment and intervention classes available, some scheduled within the school day, which enables students with different interests and talents to pursue them in greater depth, music composition with the New York Philharmonic, for example. The principal has been proactive in seeking partnerships and funding to provide many of these opportunities for the students. Consequently, the curriculum available is broad and varied with some outstanding opportunities.

The school views attendance, and particularly lateness, very seriously. Not only do they give late notes, recorded and tracked for each student, but they also aggregate minutes late and report the total time missed to parents in terms of instructional lessons lost. This is in addition to the telephone calls home, the intervention of the guidance counselor and of the principal in extreme cases. The school awards certificates for perfect attendance.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

The school's needs are the firm basis of all professional development. It is a strength of the school as it is appropriate, well received and has had a major impact on progress made. Teachers regularly observe each other's classes, which not only provides an insight into alternative methods of instruction, but also forms a firm foundation for future planning. However, the greatest impact on methodology has been the partnership with other, similar schools. This has transformed the way teachers view their role and has accelerated the benefits of small-group teaching. Coaches are valued as they work with

teachers on closely defined tasks with a specific purpose in mind. Consequently, this ensures easy evaluation and quick alterations to practice. The school has carefully selected its partnerships with outside agencies for maximum benefit.

Teachers value and appreciate the feedback from the principal's classroom observations, as it is informative and practical. This has brought about real improvement because of the way it is given and the relevance of suggestions made. As a result, the school is able to tailor professional development to the specific teacher, including any new to the school. All teachers attend programs specific to their interests and needs, which helps to drive change. Behavior is good and students thrive in a well-ordered school in which they feel safe. There is a clear protocol for intervention by outside agencies on academic, social or emotional matters. Their actions are appropriate and effective. Students respect each other and the school deals with any isolated incidents quickly and effectively by reconciliation. However, poor behavior does have consequences and the students are aware of the fact. When appropriate, the school contacts parents quickly, a proactive approach, which is valued.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal's vision for the school is to close the proficiency gap for every student. She carefully plans how to monitor the performance of students to ensure changes have a positive effect on their achievement, by standardized tests, for example. All teachers share this vision with enthusiasm because they believe it is crucial. Therefore, it underlies all they do, whether it be analyzing results or planning curriculum change. They feel empowered to make changes and do so quickly when appropriate, constantly reviewing their practice in the light of experience. Longer-term reforms are also in place, such as the review of investigative work in math. Teachers need more experience in rigorously judging their reforms in order to determine precisely which changes have had a direct impact on performance.

Joint planning is common, especially within a grade. Staff regularly review and revise these plans in the light of experience, with teachers discussing their impact on students almost daily. Additionally, cross-grade discussions are growing in frequency and here teachers are seeing even greater gains, especially in pushing on the higher-achieving students further. Teachers record the progress of students meticulously and know where deficiencies are in their understanding. Students are aware of their long-term goals and know, in general terms, what they have to do to improve. However, setting meaningful and measurable short-term targets for students in the future will have a greater impact on student achievement. The inquiry team has made great strides in this direction with its work on concept mapping and the "Think Tank" is moving in the same direction in the area of reading comprehension. The future work of the school lies in setting meaningful interim goals in order to give an early indication of success for both the individual student and the class.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Henry Bristow School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students? *	*	*	*	*	*
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?					X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?				X	
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the School's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

* 1.2 There are no special education students currently enrolled

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped