



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Thomas S. Boyland School

Elementary - Middle School 73

**251 MacDougal Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Joelle McKen

Dates of review: March 19 - 20, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Bruce Berry

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Thomas S. Boyland School is an elementary and middle school with 564 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 87% Black, 10.9% Hispanic, 0.1% White, 0.8% Asian and 1.0% other students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 88.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

The school has, in the past two years, expanded from pre-kindergarten to grade 5 to pre-kindergarten to grade 8.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's high-quality leadership is driving the vision of continually improving student achievement.
- The school makes very good use of data to monitor the progress students make in their learning.
- The school has initiated an excellent three-year planning cycle for improving student achievement.
- The school has developed an excellent system for setting goals to improve student achievement.
- The students in greatest need of improvement make very good progress as a result of the excellent support programs available to them.
- The core curriculum is effectively structured and resourced to provide very good support for student learning.
- The professional development programs are helping teachers to grow in their knowledge and skills for improving their instruction and the students' learning.
- The school has improved communications with parents, who have high praise for the support and care their children receive from the staff.
- New teachers receive excellent support for their professional and personal needs in their induction to their new environment.
- All the staff are working together well in establishing a caring and nurturing culture in the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the range of curriculum provision to provide more opportunities for all students to study a wider variety of arts subjects.
- Continue to promote, reinforce and reward positive behavior to ensure that effective learning consistently takes place, particularly with the older students.
- Explore opportunities to offer a wider range or extra-curricular enrichments and activities for the older students to improve their engagement in the life of the school.
- Continue to improve the engagement and interest in the instructional practice by the use of more student-centered learning activities.
- Continue to improve teachers' knowledge and the use of the outcomes of periodic assessments to plan differentiated activities matched to students' learning needs.
- Further improve student goal setting by fully engaging the teachers in the process to give them more ownership in monitoring their outcomes for students.

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 proficient.

Since the last Quality Review, good progress has been made in the school's use of data to monitor student progress and inform instructional practices. Communications with and the involvement of parents has improved significantly. The principal provides high-quality leadership in driving the vision of continually raising student achievement. The school has developed an excellent three-year planning cycle for monitoring progress and setting student goals. The core curriculum is well structured and resourced to provide effective support for student learning. The school's professional development program creates very good opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills. New teachers are extremely well supported through an excellent induction program to meet their own individual identified needs. All the staff work collaboratively in establishing a caring and safe environment for students. At present however, the school does not have a wide range of arts subjects or extra-curricular activities to enrich the school curriculum. The positive behavior policy is having an impact with the younger students, but is not yet fully embraced by a minority of older students. There is inconsistency in the use of student centered learning activities and in the matching of those activities to the identified learning needs of students in some classrooms. The school has excellent procedures in place for setting long-term goals for student improvement, but it is not yet fully engaging all of the teachers in that process. The inquiry team has identified the students for the research project, which is focusing on their fluency in reading.

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.

The school uses data very well to monitor the progress of student achievement. Benchmark assessments are established at the start of each school year for all students. The progress of students in kindergarten through grade 3 is effectively monitored using ECLAS 2 and DIBELS literacy assessments. This provides teachers with valuable data on the progress of students and specific skills in need of further improvement. They use ongoing classroom assessments, Acuity predictives, tests, and reading levels extremely well to monitor the improvement in achievement for students in grades 4 to 8. The teachers have valuable training in the use of data and the majority are confident in using the information to plan their instruction, student groupings and interventions. Special education students receive good support and make good progress, particularly in math. Their progress is less secure in English language arts and, as a result, many of the special education students are part of the target group for the inquiry team's research

project. English language learners make very good progress as a result of the effective support they receive in line with their identified needs. The specialist teacher regularly confers with the classroom teacher to plan their instruction and activities.

The school effectively monitors the progress of each subgroup in the school. It also successfully reviews the achievement levels of each cohort of students as they progress through the school. It has started an excellent three-year progress tracking system, which enables it to monitor past performance and to set goals for future years. The school has very useful links with other similar schools. As part of the Reading First project, several staff undertook valuable walkthroughs in another similar school to observe good practice. They also have a constructive collaboration with another school, with which they share a joint summer school program for students.

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 sets effective and measurable goals for improving student, classroom, grade and subject achievement levels. In reading, benchmark goals are established at the start of each year and periodically throughout the year in order to measure student progress against identified goals. In the testing years, grades 3 to 8, increases in proficiency ratings create the goals for one year of growth for each student in English language arts and math. Further growth is projected for another two years as part of the school’s developing and effective three-year planning cycle. The teachers provide the students with learning goals in respect of areas in which they need to improve and most students are clear about how to achieve their goals. As yet, the teachers are not fully involved in the long-term goal setting for improving student achievement. The students in greatest need of improvement have excellent programs for supporting their specific needs and, as a result, make very good progress in their achievement levels. Academic intervention services, after school programs, small group instruction and individual help are used effectively to support the students with their learning. A newly purchased commercial literacy program, with in-built intervention strategies, is used very effectively with the struggling learners.

The school goals are shared with the teachers through meetings and conferences throughout the year. Although the goals are prominently displayed within the school, the parents are not consistently aware of the goals, but are very clear about the learning goals set by teachers for their children. The high expectations for improving student outcomes are shared by all sections of the school community. The parents have great praise for the work and the care of the teachers in helping their children to progress academically and socially. They receive valuable monthly progress reports, together with regular report cards, to keep them updated on how well their children are doing in their studies. The school has worked extremely well to improve the range and level of communication with parents. The open door policy allows parents to meet the principal or teachers at any time if they have any concerns in respect of their children’s progress or well being. The school provides many opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school, including a range of workshops covering topics such as literacy, math, test information, HIV, gang awareness, fire prevention alongside other topics useful to families.

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 proficient.

The school follows the mandated curriculum, using balanced literacy and Everyday Mathematics in the core subjects. The curriculum is effectively structured and the generous resources provide excellent support for student learning. The principal has used the budget imaginatively to purchase extra commercial packages and programs to provide good support and enrichment for teachers to use to enhance the core curriculum. A useful art program is incorporated within the curriculum, but the range of different arts subjects available for the students is limited. The principal holds conferences with all teachers in order to set goals at the start of each year. Mid-year conferences are used effectively to review progress and update their goals and objectives. Some of the instruction creates high levels of engagement and interest for student learning. The differentiated and student centered activities enable students to be active participants in their own learning. In some instruction, however, the activities are not fully matched to the individual students’ learning needs and the students are not always actively engaged in their own learning.

The budget, staffing and scheduling are used effectively to support the curriculum and instruction. Technology facilities, classroom reading libraries and academic intervention services have been enhanced in the past year. The school promotes high levels of respect and care for the individual student through the positive behavior policy and practices. The majority of students demonstrate high levels of respect and self-discipline in the school. However, there is a minority of students who provide particular challenges in the way they behave towards teachers and the other students. Many of these students have been sent to the school following serious behavioral issues in the many other educational establishments they have attended. The school has very good procedures and practices for monitoring and celebrating good attendance. First-day calling, home visits and conferences with parents are used well to improve attendance for identified students. Incentives, such as trips and rewards, are used to encourage students to maintain high attendance levels. For example, the “bucks” rewards for good attendance can be spent in the school store, with older children getting admission to school parties in exchange for their “bucks”.

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 principal regularly undertakes effective observations and classroom walkthroughs to monitor the quality of the instruction. Useful feedback is given after each observation on the strengths and the identified areas for improvement. The teachers appreciate the support they receive, as is clearly demonstrated when they said of the principal, “She tries for excellence and her expectations are clear.” The excellent professional development programs give teachers the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills for improving student outcomes. Staff developers provide very good support for literacy and math for all the grade teams. The Reading First coach works effectively with

kindergarten through grade 3 teachers to help them improve the reading levels of their students. The teachers get valuable support in using the new Acuity system. They work collaboratively to plan their curriculum and instruction. They have common planning time, meet in grade teams to plan together, review student data and coordinate their instructional activities. The teachers make useful inter-visitations to observe good practice in the school. An observation guide document is completed and the teachers take part in a debriefing session. The new teachers have excellent support from a mentor. They have a useful program to help them develop their professional skills in their new school.

The school provides a full range of excellent services to support the students' academic and social development. The guidance counselor and school psychologist give very good support and individual counseling to at-risk students. They also provide valuable support and advice for families. The school effectively uses the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support program, which acknowledges and rewards positive behavior. It is successful in promoting good behavior with the younger students and with many of those in the older age group. However, it is not yet fully successful in moderating the behavior of a minority of older students, who are not fully engaged or self-motivated in their learning. The school has some partnerships to provide after school enrichments, such as ballroom dancing and a school choir, for the students. However, there are limited opportunities for extra-curricular enrichments and activities for the older students in order to provide them with further interest and engagement in school.

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 school has very good plans and goals for improving student outcomes. Challenging goals are set, together with interim benchmarks, for improving the reading levels of all students. Proficiency ratings are used extremely well to define goals for each student in respect of their outcomes in English language arts and math. This one-year growth goal is further extended to anticipate further growth in the following two years. This process is not yet supported by the engagement of the teachers in the long-term goal-setting program. The majority of teachers are working well to plan their instruction, differentiated activities and interventions based on the outcomes of the analysis of periodic assessments. They are effectively using reading programs and Acuity tests to identify specific skills in need of further improvement. They immediately collaborate to adjust their curriculum, instruction and student learning activities in line with the needs identified from the data. However, some teachers are less secure and less confident in using the data to match the learning activities to the students' individual needs. The principal is extremely skilled in using data outcomes to inform strategic decisions. For example, new literacy programs were purchased in order to help students raise their achievement in English language arts. There is an excellent collaborative approach to reviewing the impact of the curriculum and instruction and for planning future activities to support learning. The teachers are fully involved in planning month-by-month curriculum maps and pacing calendars for the future academic year. The whole school community supports the vision of "Striving for Greatness". The school is making good progress on the road to success and has the capacity to continue to improve.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Thomas S. Boyland 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?			X		
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		

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