



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Abraham Lincoln School**

**Middle School 171**

**528 Ridgewood Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11208**

**Principal: Joan Beckman**

**Dates of review: March 31 - April 1, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Diana Shepherd**

# Content of the report

## **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

## **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

## **Part 3: Main Findings**

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

## **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Abraham Lincoln School is an intermediate school with 892 students from grade 5 through grade 8. The school population comprises 12% Black, 74% Hispanic, 2% White, and 12% Asian students. The student body includes 21.3% English language learners and 12.6% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 88.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 83% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The whole community shares the vision for this school, promoting high expectations for all.
- The administration uses data strategically to evaluate the effectiveness of all plans and to set future whole school goals.
- Data is use well to inform instruction and to set and revise goals for all students.
- The school embeds challenge in the curriculum for the more able students, resulting in increasing numbers achieving higher grades.
- Instruction for English language learners is robust and they make good progress.
- The rigorous and collaborative approach to identifying learning needs results in effective support for special education students.
- Academic intervention services for students are good and the scheduling ensures that students are motivated to attend and so make good progress.
- Professional expectations are high and well-focused professional development ensures that teachers are well informed and effective.
- Students engage well with learning and are articulate, reflective members of the school community.
- Partnerships with colleges and specialist high schools prepare students well for the next steps in their education.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all students attend school regularly through a continued focus on daily and punctual attendance by all.
- Build upon the work of the parent teacher association in engaging more parents to be able to support their children in achieving their goals.

## 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.**

Since the last review, the leadership has developed the systems for collecting and using data effectively in order to have a good understanding of the performance and progress of students. The work of the inquiry team has focused on the performance of the lowest third of students, English language learners and special education students, and this has supported the school's capacity to set them measurable goals. A detailed analysis of skills using periodic assessments has provided information to support this process. The school has also made good strides in the development of technology as a tool for learning and has invested in laptops and projectors.

The leadership of the principal is strong and focused on achievement. The school collects a wide range of data and uses it well to inform whole school and individual student goals. It makes effective use of technology to make comparisons with other populations and to track progress towards goals. This focus supports the achievement of the large group of English language learners and special education students by ensuring that their instruction accurately addresses their needs. The school also makes good provision for the most able in grade 8, delivering a challenging math and science curriculum, which has resulted in an increase in the percentage of higher attaining students. These high expectations permeate the whole school community and drive the professional development program for teachers as well as the curriculum for students. The principal has introduced an interdisciplinary curriculum, which provides a purposeful context for English language arts in other subjects, and is beginning to have a positive impact on reading and writing.

Students behave well, work hard and enjoy being in school. When they have trouble, the guidance team gives well-considered and coordinated support. Attendance, however, remains an issue and the school is working hard to improve it.

### **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 consistently and effectively to provide an overview of the progress made by students in all areas. The administration evaluates this information rigorously and uses it to understand the learning needs of all students across each grade and faculty. They disaggregate the data from assessments to get a full picture of the achievement and progress made by all groups including special education students and

English language learners. For the past two years, they have also looked at the trends and patterns across the data, in particular the comparative achievement by gender and by ethnic group. As a result, the cabinet has adjusted the curriculum to address the identified learning styles of boys in reading and math for girls. The school has not identified any significant issues relating to the achievement of ethnic groups. The data analysis also indicated that the curriculum was not giving the higher achievers sufficient challenge in math and science. Therefore, the administration has introduced two higher-level classes in grade 8 where students are taught the grade 9 curriculum with positive results. Partnerships with colleges have also resulted in college test-prep classes, raising the expectations of students for the next steps in their education.

The assistant principals look at progress against goals made by both students and teachers. They look at class performance and use it as a measure of effective instruction, informing both staffing and professional development. The focus on development has resulted in improved teacher attendance and greater retention of staff overall. The school benchmarks itself with other middle schools in the cohort. This is proving an effective method of measuring achievement in the school. Training on the use of data is rigorous and regular and teachers are confident it both collecting and using the information from all assessment systems.

**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 cabinet works in a highly collaborative manner. They plan strategically for the achievement of all students and set interim goals in order to measure progress. The assistant principals in each grade and faculty share these plans with teachers. They support teachers to set specific goals for each student and then use the data from the periodic assessments to measure their progress. Assessment is varied and relevant to the subject area and students are encouraged to monitor their own progress in a range of ways. As a result, students make good progress and become increasingly independent in identifying the next steps in their learning. Teachers keep assessment notebooks with all the relevant data regularly analyzed and revised which support both instruction and intervention where necessary. The school schedules academic intervention services both before and after school in order not to interfere with the planned curriculum. Teachers refer students to these services when data analysis indicates there is a problem with learning. Push-in teachers work with identified classes to support special education students and English language learners, providing a specialist focus to support learning. As a result, the achievement of both groups is improved and they make good progress.

The inquiry team focuses on the achievement of the lowest achieving third of students. English language learners are a significant element within this group. The analysis of performance data relating to these students shows that achievement and progress are poor and therefore the school has adjusted the classes to improve their learning. Spanish speaking teachers support the instruction for English language learners and in addition, they have immersion in English. This strategy is having a positive impact.

The cabinet shares whole school goals across the school in a range of ways. Grade leaders disseminate information through monthly grade conferences. Regular study groups and common prep times are also forums where teachers share strategic goals. Student goals relate clearly to the whole school objectives and articulate high

expectations. They are visible in each classroom, and as a result, all students know their personal and class goals, ensuring that they understand what they must do to achieve their grades. The school holds regular parent teacher conferences and attendance at these is very high. The school shares data from periodic assessments with parents. Parents are involved at all stages when students are experiencing difficulties. The parent coordinator works with the parent teacher association to engage parents and support them to understand the goals set for their children. However, only a small number do engage fully and this is an area for further improvement. The school is working closely with the parent coordinator to explore options for this.

**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.**

At Abraham Lincoln School, the curriculum at each stage builds upon prior learning. Initial assessments provide a baseline for teachers to build upon. Periodic assessments ensure that teachers track progress and identify gaps in learning in a timely manner. The Core Knowledge curriculum, which the school has recently introduced, is an inter-disciplinary curriculum for social studies and art. Teachers plan their instruction thematically, providing a purposeful context for learning. For example, art and history link with literacy when the students are learning about the Egyptians, or the American civil war. The science curriculum is investigative and all students, including those with severe learning needs, experience hands-on learning. As a result, all are motivated and very engaged by learning.

The administration provides clear guidance to support teachers. Monthly schedules give updated information relating to testing and other significant events. Coaches team-teach and provide information for pacing the curriculum. They scrutinize planning to ensure instruction is differentiated. Teachers use data analysis to group students flexibly. This helps students to achieve their goals and to make progress. The impact of this work is good and instruction in most cases meets the needs of students. Data drives all strategic budgetary and scheduling decisions. For example, the administration has employed additional support teachers and has realigned the schedule to meet the needs of students and improve the impact of academic intervention. More students are attending these services as a result.

Students are respectful and articulate. They enjoy school and appreciate the efforts made by the teachers on their behalf. They respond well to the high expectations articulated by the cabinet and work hard to achieve their goals. They willingly accept the opportunities to be independent and take responsibility for aspects of school life through Students’ Council. Attendance, however, is still an issue despite the very good strategies to improve the numbers of students in school. Currently the average is 90% each day, which is a clear improvement and the administration aims to improve this further.

**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 uses a range of strategies to support developments in instruction and ensure it meets the learning needs of students. The administration provides good support through the coaches and sets goals for improvement, which clearly inform the professional development program. They track these goals over time. As a result, the quality of instruction is good. Lessons are well-planned and delivered to meet the needs of students. Displays give students good advice and guidance to support their learning. Through intervisitations and common prep times, teachers have developed a culture of collaboration. The teachers enjoy working together. It is common to see teachers in the corridors discussing the organization of a group or activity. This presents opportunities for moderation of standards and levels of achievement, ensuring consistency in expectations and instruction. There is a good program of support for new teachers and this ensures rapid induction into protocols and procedures.

Good teamwork is central to the support for vulnerable students and the school has developed sensitive and responsive processes to ensure they meet the needs of all. Staff apply the discipline policy consistently and all students respond well to the systems of rewards and consequences. Behavior around the school is good and the number of suspensions has fallen. Well-considered partnerships provide an extra dimension to the curriculum for both teachers and students.

**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 well developed.**

Strategic planning is robust. All plans have clear and rigorous indicators of what success will look like, and tracking is systematic. The cabinet evaluates the outcomes of teacher monitoring and places teachers in grades according to their strengths. The cabinet uses the outcomes of periodic assessments to measure the effectiveness of programs and interventions designed to improve student achievement. In addition, they take account of other relevant information such as attendance and English language learner assessments. This information informs both long and short-term goals for the school and the cabinet establishes action plans for each area of focus.

The vision for the school underpins strategic planning and is the driver for all change. The administration evaluates the Comprehensive Education Plan annually and all action plans are revised in the light of this work. The revised goals inform professional development. This process is thorough and strategic. The principal's performance goals also link directly to those set for the whole school. They are reviewed annually and last year they were exceeded.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Abraham Lincoln School</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				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 demanding, 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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				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?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				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?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>