



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Floyd Bennett School

Elementary School 203

**5101 Avenue M
Brooklyn
NY 11234**

Principal: Lisa Esposito

Dates of review: January 16 - 18, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Tony Boys

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Floyd Bennett School is an elementary school with 942 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 84% Black, 10% Hispanic, 4% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 12% 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 94%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 72% eligibility.

The school draws most of its students from its neighborhood zone but some travel from further afield. There is considerable mobility among families in the area, with the consequence that the school admits new students in all grades at different points throughout the year. Currently, around 70 new students have been admitted since the start of the school year in grades 3-5 alone, with approximately 300 new students school wide.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a very clear vision for the future of the school and works very well with administration to promote student achievement.
- Highly effective systems for collecting and analyzing data give teachers a clear understanding of individual students' progress.
- Teachers use data well to match instruction to students' learning needs.
- The curriculum is broad and relevant, supported by good instruction that promotes achievement and meets individual needs.
- The school provides a harmonious and positive learning environment because it makes clear its high expectations to the whole community.
- Students have many opportunities to develop responsible citizenship because the school promotes trust, respect and good relationships.
- The parent coordinator and teachers work well together to ensure that parents are well informed and involved in their children's education.
- The organization and programs for special education students meets their needs exceptionally well.
- Systems to encourage good behavior are clear, consistent and understood by all.
- Attendance is good because the school has very effective incentives and monitoring systems in place.

What the school needs to improve

- Review strategies for raising the achievement of students most in need of improvement in literacy.
- Provide an induction process for new admits to ensure that they quickly get used to the school's systems and expectations.
- Extend to all lessons the very effective approaches that are already used in many classes to encourage active student participation.
- Refine the school's systems for making comparisons with student progress in similar schools.

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.

The principal has a very clear vision for the future development of the school, based on giving all students access to a balanced and relevant education that helps them to succeed. In pursuit of this goal, the school has comprehensive systems for assessing and recording the progress of individual students, allowing teachers to have a good knowledge of students' learning needs. Special education students undergo extra assessments that help the school to meet their needs very well. The school analyzes the performance of different groups of students but it does not yet compare its performance in depth with that of similar schools, in order to identify and benefit from good practice that exists elsewhere.

A high proportion of students achieve very good progress because the school makes its high expectations very clear to all the community and has very good systems for keeping parents informed and involved in their children's education. The school has not been as successful in raising the achievement of a minority of students who are most in need of improvement in their literacy skills.

The school has a rich, diverse and innovative curriculum that provides a broad and relevant education. This is aided by the school's membership of the Core Knowledge learning network. Teachers use assessment data well to plan instruction that meets students' learning needs. Most lessons fully engage students in their work. However, this is not the case in some lessons, although instruction is still effective because it is clearly focused on achieving learning objectives. Staff and students trust and respect each other. The school encourages responsibility and good citizenship through an in-house program known as SOAR. Attendance is very good because the school has clear systems to monitor and reward good attendance. Day-to-day running of the school is very smooth and students behave well, due to the clear and effective procedures that are in place. Student support services are well organized and targeted effectively on meeting students' needs, except in the case of students who join the school midway through the year, for whom there is no induction program.

The school has tackled the issues raised in the previous Quality Review by improving feedback from lesson monitoring, extending the use of rubrics and assessment tools and by using benchmarking data to revise planning goals.

A data inquiry team has been established and a target group identified. The team has regular meetings to discuss strategies for raising achievement.

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 has comprehensive systems for assessing and recording the progress of individual students. Teachers have had effective training to enable them to use these systems confidently. The principal and administration use Student Growth Monitor to track progress and analyze data in literacy. Teachers record data on tracking sheets and book progress reading cards and they have access to benchmark data provided by administration. The school identifies a "skill of the week" as the particular focus for assessment in grades 3 through 5. Teachers make good use of different assessment schemes for students in the upper and lower grades, ensuring that assessment is appropriate to the students' stage of development. In math, teachers use "checking progress" assessments at the end of each unit and review the results with a supervisor at four points throughout the year. "Strand of the week" provides the focus for classroom assessment in math. Taken together, these assessment systems give teachers a very clear picture of the achievement of individual students. Special education students undergo extra assessments that help the school to meet their needs extremely well through additional instruction, self-contained classes and collaborative team teaching classes.

The principal and administration have designed the school's assessment systems very carefully so that they yield meaningful data on which to take action in raising achievement. The school analyzes the performance of different groups of students, such as English language learners, and it compares progress over time, across the school and in different classes and grades. It does not yet compare its performance in depth with that of similar schools, in order to identify and benefit from good practice that exists elsewhere.

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.

A high proportion of students achieve very good progress because the school makes its high expectations very clear to all the community. This is reinforced by very effective systems for keeping parents informed and involved in their children's education. Parents and teachers value the work of the parent coordinator and see it as extremely helpful in building a community spirit and sense of common purpose. As one parent remarked, "This is a very caring school, it's a real family". The school publishes a very useful parents' information guide and runs monthly workshops, ensuring that parents have very good information about their children's progress and how they can help them to succeed. Parents understand that the school values their support and wants them to keep the school informed about their children's learning needs. "It's easy to see the teachers here, the door is always open at this school", is a typical comment from parents.

Teachers promote good progress and high achievement by working collaboratively to set improvement goals based on assessment data. They use a variety of means, including grade conferences, faculty meetings and one-to-one sessions with the coaches to discuss student progress and set targets for individual students. All teachers have access to the

school's analysis of data, ensuring that they understand the implications of assessment information. In addition, each teacher identifies and focuses on five students whose progress could be improved with extra support. Internal assessment data shows that this "Spotlight 5" approach is beginning to impact positively on achievement. This shared approach to setting goals and monitoring progress has enabled the majority of students to achieve well. The school has not been as successful in raising to the same level the achievement of a minority of students who are most in need of improvement in their literacy skills.

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 outstanding.

The principal has driven the school forward in bringing about change to the curriculum and instruction in order to raise student achievement. Consequently, the school has a rich, diverse and innovative curriculum that provides a broad and relevant education. The introduction of Core Knowledge units is central to this change. Through this, students study a number of themes focused on history and geography, helping them to form balanced views and an appreciation of their place in the world. This work has been very well received by students, teachers and parents, who are all enthusiastic about its impact on motivation and learning. The evidence of this can be seen in display work around the school and in students' obvious enjoyment as they present Core Knowledge celebrations to their parents and other students.

Core Knowledge enhances the curriculum, which also includes opportunities for students to experience music, art and physical activities as well as the mandatory subjects. As with other strategic decisions, the principal and administration have planned these changes carefully to make the maximum impact on achievement and learning. They have ensured that teachers use assessment data very well to plan instruction that meets students' learning needs. This is clearly evident in lessons, where students often work in small groups with differentiated tasks. In many lessons teaching is interesting and compelling, fully engaging students in their work. This is not the case in a minority of lessons, although instruction is still effective because it is clearly focused on achieving learning objectives.

The very positive learning environment is a result of the very high level of trust and respect that staff and students show for each other. The school has introduced the SOAR (Show self-control; On task; Act kindly and follow directions; Responsible and respectful) program to encourage and reward respect, responsibility and good citizenship. The influence of this is seen in all aspects of school life. Students are very positive about the program and respond well to it. Attendance is very good because the school has clear systems to monitor and reward good attendance. Parents and students understand these systems very well and expect early contact from the school in cases of unexplained absence. This also has a very positive influence on learning.

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, administration and coaches monitor teaching well, through formal and informal classroom observations. Following these observations, teachers receive constructive feedback to help them hone their teaching skills. Teachers rate this process as, "really helpful". In addition, teachers have the opportunity to observe each other teaching and to see demonstration lessons from the coaches and other teachers. These processes help administration to target professional development on each teacher's needs. A good example of the school's thoughtful approach to professional development is seen in the creation of a Core Knowledge facilitator post to provide training and support for this key initiative. All teachers feel that the school meets their training needs well.

Day-to-day running of the school is very smooth, due to the very clear and effective procedures that are in place. Staff, students and parents understand the school's expectations in terms of work and conduct. This helps to make the school a very calm and orderly place in which to learn. The SOAR program ensures that there is a constant focus on responsible and considerate behavior. Students respond very well to this positive reinforcement of good conduct. The school takes in a high proportion of students from other schools during the course of the year. There is currently no induction program for these students to help them understand and adapt quickly to what is expected of them. Otherwise, student support services are well organized and targeted effectively on meeting students' needs.

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.

The principal has a very clear vision for the future development of the school, based on giving all students access to a balanced and relevant education that helps them to succeed in life. She works very well with administration to turn this aim into reality by providing a high quality of curriculum and instruction. Effective planning supports this process and the school has good systems for basing its plans on assessment data and monitoring the impact of its improvement strategies. This leads to revision of plans where necessary. The school supplements the Comprehensive Education Plan with specific plans for each strand so that development can be managed effectively. As a result of these processes, major changes such as the introduction of Core Knowledge and the SOAR program have enhanced the education the school provides. These changes have been successful because they have been based on careful consideration of the school's real development needs, supported by a very good understanding of the implications of assessment data. The use of interim goals has helped in monitoring the progress of plans and modifying them to meet changing needs. This is clearly evident in the changes made to curriculum maps and schemes of instruction, which are revised regularly. The school is careful to ensure that planning focuses on improving achievement and learning. This has had a positive influence on the progress that students make.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| SCHOOL NAME: Floyd Bennett 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 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 |
| 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? | | | | | 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? | | | | | 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 |

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