



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Dyker School

Elementary School 229

**1400 Benson Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11228**

Principal: James J. Harrigan

Dates of review: February 26 - 27, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Bruce Berry

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Dyker School is an elementary school with 598 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 0.7% Black, 9.8% Hispanic, 46.5% White, and 43% Asian students. The student body includes 12.7% English language learners and 11.2% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 96.0%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school is operating on 120% capacity, which is leading to significant overcrowding and large class sizes.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's excellent leadership is creating the drive and vision for continually improving student outcomes.
- The teachers work collaboratively to plan the curriculum and instruction.
- The school uses data extremely well to monitor the progress of student achievement and to plan interventions where the need is identified.
- Students in need of greatest improvement receive excellent support and make very good gains in achievement.
- The high-quality curriculum, including an extensive arts program, provide excellent challenge, motivation and interest for student learning.
- The professional development programs provide effective opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge, skills and to share good practice.
- The school uses its limited budget resources imaginatively to support the curriculum and instruction.
- The excellent communication systems provide parents with regular information about their children's progress and achievement levels.
- The caring and respectful culture in the school provides an environment where students feel safe and enjoy their learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Further improve teachers' knowledge of the use of interim goals to review progress in meeting their long-term goals.
- Provide more consistency across all classrooms in setting student goals for improving achievement levels.
- Further improve the consistency of the differentiation of instruction to match the learning activities to students' identified needs.
- Continue to refine the school's data systems to provide regular progress indicators across the full range of subject areas.

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 Quality Review, the school has considerably improved its use of data to monitor student progress and has improved teachers' knowledge of the requirements and standards across all the grades. They have made very good progress in the differentiation of instruction throughout kindergarten through grade 2. There is, however, less consistency in the use of differentiated instruction across grades 3 to 5. The principal provides excellent leadership and the drive for continually improving student outcomes. The school has developed excellent data systems for monitoring student progress. It has effective plans and goals for improving student outcomes with clearly defined interim checkpoints and specific measures to monitor progress in reaching its long-term goals.

The excellent curriculum, including an exciting range of arts subjects, provides a high level of engagement and interest for student learning. The teachers are well supported in their own development by the high-quality training and coaching they receive. The school has created a highly caring and nurturing culture where student learning is fun. It communicates well with parents and engages them fully as partners in their children's education. At present, the use of interim goals is not consistently used to monitor teachers' progress in reaching their long-term goals. The school sets excellent individual goals for students in greatest need of improvement, but the goal setting is not consistently used with other students in the school. The inquiry team has agreed the focus for the research project and has identified the target group of students.

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 use data extremely well to monitor the progress in student achievement. The teachers receive excellent training and are confident in using of a variety of assessment tools. The teachers effectively use ECLAS and guided assessments to track student progress in reading. The students' achievement in reading is compared to periodic benchmarks throughout the year to ensure that progress is being maintained. Teachers analyze specific skills in need of further improvement and plan support and interventions based on students' individual needs. The school makes excellent use of the Scantron system to provide periodic assessments of student progress and to analyze the strengths and areas for improvement for individual and groups of students.

Tests, quizzes and teacher assessment are effectively used to monitor the progress students are making in math. The teachers make very good use of rubrics to assess students' written work. The rubrics are also used and understood by students and are sent home for parents, with explanations on their use given at parent and teacher conferences.

Special education students receive excellent support through self-contained, pullout sessions and the extended day program. As a result, the students are making excellent progress, with some students moving from self-contained classes to regular education classes. English language learners receive effective support in line with their identified levels and almost 40% of the students gained proficiency this year. The school analyzes data very well against all the different subgroups, which has revealed very little difference in the student outcomes in respect of gender and ethnicity. There is evidence of good progress across most grades and the school recognizes the need for more focus on the progress of students across the full range of subjects. The school has partnerships with several similar schools. It is looking at focused activities in those schools to improve their own programs.

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 has developed a very effective goal-setting system linked to students' present levels in achievement, with specific goals for growth over a period of time. The goals are based on the data outcomes from the Scantron assessment system, with clearly defined time frames to monitor progress in meeting long-term goals. Students are divided into three broad categories, which include those at risk, students in need of specific improvement and advanced students. Differentiated goals are set for each of these groups of students. This excellent process for the setting of improvement goals allows senior leaders to regularly monitor the progress of students, classes, grades and subjects. However, the system is not yet providing consistency across all classrooms in setting individual student goals for improving their own achievement levels. The support provided for students in greatest need of improvement is leading to excellent gains in their achievement levels. A wide range of targeted intervention programs, such as Reading Recovery, Great Leaps, Foundations, Wilson and others, generate very good growth in student achievement.

The school communicates the goals to all sections of the school community through a variety of meetings, newsletters and parent workshops. Very high expectations are in evidence throughout the school community and in all aspects of the school's work. Those expectations are brought to life in colorful celebrations of students' work in all classrooms and around the school. The excellent communication systems give parents regular updates on their children's progress and achievement levels. Parents receive regular progress reports and teachers contact them if there are any areas of concern in respect of their child's achievement. The school holds valuable grade orientation meetings with parents at the start of each year to share the curriculum and instructional goals. The science fair, performing arts functions and the many workshops for parents create very good opportunities for the parents to be partners in their children's education and to take part in the life of the school.

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 high-quality curriculum creates high levels of challenge, strong motivation and very good interest for student learning. The school follows the mandated curriculum across the full range of subjects. The teachers receive high-quality training in the use of the balanced literacy program. The Everyday Math program and the practical science activities create very good engagement for the students. A wide range of exciting arts programs, which include visual arts, music, dance and orchestra, creates further enrichment in the curriculum. The school is using their new extension building program as an exciting learning opportunity for the students. Bottles dating from 1875 to 1925 that have been recovered from the site works are being used as part of the curriculum research project for the students. In classroom visits, the principal focuses on the work of specific students in order to check the impact of the instruction on their progress. The instruction creates high levels of engagement, exciting activities and provides very good interest for student in their learning. This is illustrated by one student who said, “We have fun while learning”. Learning activities are effectively differentiated to match the learning needs of students and are particularly effective in the kindergarten through grade 2. There is less consistency in matching the learning activities to students’ identified needs in grades 3 to 5.

The budget, staffing and scheduling are used imaginatively to support the curriculum and instruction. As a result of analyzing data, the school hired an extra academic intervention teacher to support student learning. After-school programs are funded to provide useful test preparation for students in grades 3 to 5. The findings from a survey led to a total rethink in the science curriculum. A science coach was hired, the science facilities upgraded and the curriculum was changed to provide exciting and stimulating hands-on experimental learning for the students. The staff generate a caring and respectful culture throughout the school. Students feel safe and enjoy their learning. A further illustration of the students’ enjoyment of their education is the extremely high attendance levels in the school.

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.

Senior leaders make regular visits to classrooms to monitor the quality and effectiveness of instruction. They provide valuable verbal and written feedback for teachers on their strengths and aspects of instruction in need of improvement. The classroom visits are used quite often to focus on the work of a particular student. One recent area of focus has been the use of graphic organizers in looking at the key elements of stories. The professional development programs give excellent support to teachers in enhancing their knowledge, skills and in sharing good practice. The teachers also have valuable opportunities to develop their skills as trainers by turn keying to their colleagues the new ideas they have acquired on external courses. The teachers work collaboratively in

grade teams with the coaches to plan their curriculum and instruction. They also have very good opportunities to meet regularly in inter-grade sessions to look at standards across the grades. This provides effective continuity for students as they progress through the school. New teachers receive excellent support from a mentor and have a full program of activities, which are aligned to recognized standards for teaching.

The school has developed an exciting and interesting program for building the students' academic and social understanding. The highly effective program of health and social development covers many issues including neglect, drug prevention, healthy lifestyle, anti-bullying and coping with grief. There is also the character-building program, with puppets in wheelchairs presentation, to make students sensitive to issues faced by different groups of people. The students demonstrate very high levels of self-discipline, respect for adults and respect for one another. The school has good procedures in place, which provide a calm environment where effective learning can take place. The school has developed a wide range of partnerships to provide high quality academic and enrichment activities for the students. These include a full range of academic support, with enrichments such as ballroom dancing, Halloween window painting, the musical band, a musical talent program, a junior tennis league and many other exciting activities.

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 school has developed excellent plans and goals for improving student outcomes. The plans include specific interim goals and clear checkpoints for monitoring the progress made in reaching the school's long-term goals. The goals effectively capture the students' present and projected outcomes with respect to their progress over time. The school leaders use the process to great effect to monitor the impact of their plans and goals on student achievement at classroom, grade and subject level. Although the senior leaders use the system effectively, the teachers are not yet consistently engaged in using it to review progress in meeting their own short and long-term goals. However, the teachers effectively use the outcomes of periodic assessments to identify specific skills in need of further improvements in order to plan interventions for individual and groups of students. The teachers work together very well to monitor the impact of the curriculum and instruction on student progress. They respond quickly and effectively to adjust plans in response to the changing needs identified from the data.

School leaders expertly use data from a variety of sources to make strategic decisions to continue to improve student outcomes. For example, the results of a survey provided the information leading to a complete rethink of the way in which science is taught throughout the school. The science curriculum is now fully based on practical hands-on research activities. The school planning cycle involves all staff in a full review of the impact and effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction. The teachers effectively plan curriculum maps and pacing calendars for each academic year. They also meet together across the grades to gain an effective understanding of the standards required to ensure continuity for student learning as they move through the school. The whole school community fully supports the vision for raising student achievement and creates a culture where students feel safe, happy and have fun while they are learning.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Dyker 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