



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Mill Basin**

**Elementary School 236**

**6302 Avenue U  
Brooklyn  
NY 11234**

**Principal: Mary Barton**

**Dates of review: September 26 - 28, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Richard Woolf**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Mill Basin is an elementary school with 624 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 23.5% Black, 8% Hispanic, 63.2% White and 5.4% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 8.5% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 95.5%. The school does not receive Title 1 funding.

The school shares the building with Public School 771, a District 75 school. A growing number of the special education students follow an inclusive education program with the students from Mill Basin. They share facilities such as the gymnasium and auditorium as well as a school-based support team.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school's understanding of the needs of special education students, English language learners and others in need of special focus is exemplary.
- The high expectations placed upon every member of the school community to achieve are exceptional.
- The arts program enhances the curriculum.
- The school has excellent procedures in place for the induction of new teachers and for all staff to share ideas openly.
- The resourcefulness of the principal greatly assists the smooth running of the school.
- The students are respectful of each other and adults.
- The high levels of attendance demonstrate the value of the school to the community.
- The open and professional manner in which the staff work together is of the highest caliber.
- This is a high achieving school, which continues to grow and support the aspirations of the local community.
- A passionate and enthusiastic parent body supports the school in reaching its goals.

### What the school needs to improve

- Utilize assessment data more rigorously to make strategic decisions about professional development.
- Develop methods of evaluating the effectiveness of differentiated learning as a means of further raising achievement.

## 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 is an experienced educator, in her 10th year as leader of the school. She provides strong inspirational leadership, which is valued by staff, parents and students. She is determined the school will deliver an academic program which enhances the educational and life opportunities of all the students in her care. The principal is supported by an outstanding team of professionals who are goal driven, exceptionally supportive and sensitive to the needs of their students.

The use of data is a strength of the school and it informs every aspect of the teaching and learning process. The school sets challenging goals for its staff and students to continuously improve their performance and this is reflected further in high quality teaching. The skilful use of resources similarly enhances the instruction the students receive. It is constantly seeking ways to improve student achievement and recognizes the need for effective professional development that will enhance differentiated learning for individual students. Parents wholeheartedly praise the school for the efforts it makes to challenge all students to fulfill their true potential in a warm and welcoming manner. This includes not only academic goals but personal ones as well.

There is a vast array of evidence to demonstrate considerable progress has been made to meet the areas for improvement since the last Quality Review. The most significant has been the appointment of a full time English language learner teacher. Similarly, the improvement in student writing since working with Columbia University's Teachers' College is evident in classrooms and around the school. The sharing of best practice amongst staff is a growing strength.

The school is making progress in establishing its inquiry team by building upon the work of the current academic intervention team.

### 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.**

This is a high achieving school and data usage has contributed significantly to maintaining and extending its success. The school has a wealth of data that it analyzes by subject at grade and whole school level. The information is shared across the entire staff and informs every aspect of teacher instruction. The principal and her assistant are constantly

seeking new and better ways to disseminate the data and use all current technology to assist them to that end.

The identification, by data, of the needs of special education students and English language learners is outstanding. The school completes very detailed assessments of these groups. As a result the academic intervention services team have detailed and precise information on how to plan and deliver instruction. The outcomes have been extremely rewarding with all students reaching level 2 on State tests and the majority of the English language learners reached the advanced or proficient level in State English language proficiency test.

The school dedicates a large amount of time, effort and resource in analyzing its data to compare and look for trends against gender and ethnic groups as well as similar and peer schools. This has enabled the school to continue to perform at the highest levels and this is a driving force for future developments and initiatives. A particular strength of the school is the manner by which it is constantly challenging itself to use the data to improve, thus enhancing the opportunities of its staff and 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.**

A key to the success of this school is its ability to be proactive in goal setting. The principal openly shares her plans and goals for the year with the entire school community. The plans are adjusted within set timeframes and frequently revisited. The administration conferences with staff regularly, either individually or at grade level meetings as well as holding monthly parent meetings. This enables them to use relevant data to make timely and accurate diagnosis of the needs of individuals or groups of special interest. Staff are very aware of the planning cycle and how timeframes for achieving goals sharpen their individual planning. This careful planning has been of particular importance in raising the achievements of special education students and English language learners. The hiring of a full time English language learner teacher has been significant in assisting this identified group but also in supporting general education teachers. The principal looks carefully at emerging trends and uses the data to challenge those students operating at Levels 3 and 4 and the staff responsible for their instruction.

The parent body works very closely with the school and further acts as a fulcrum for improvement. They are an integral part of the planning process and are appreciative of the efforts the school makes to keep them informed of student progress. This not only applies to their own children but the school as a whole and parents see this as a significant strength.

**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.**

Over a number of years, Mill Basin has gained a reputation as a high achieving establishment and this continues to be the case. As a result, they achieved exempt status

from the delivery of the mandatory curriculum. This has resulted in the staff experimenting in curriculum design and planning for the benefit of all its students. The school offers an exciting arts program for its students and the principal is looking for ways of further extending the program. Curriculum mapping and pacing calendars ensure a very effective delivery across all subjects. The curriculum is adjusted constantly to meet the needs of individual students and groups, because of the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. A great deal of teacher effort is placed in delivering differentiated instruction and there is strong evidence to demonstrate effectiveness. However, the evaluation of this effectiveness is not fully developed and does not yet extend to individual learning.

The principal is an exceedingly resourceful person and has used the budget to great effect. She has managed to ensure her decision-making focuses entirely on raising student achievement. This is not specifically in terms of testing outcomes but by ensuring the development of the whole child in a safe and secure environment, which is conducive to learning. The relationships between students and adults are first class and the atmosphere throughout the entire building is positive and welcoming. The students are rewarded for their efforts and constantly encouraged to achieve at the highest levels. This is exemplified by the student's participation in numerous prestigious inter-school academic competitions in which they are very successful. The attendance rate is constantly at a high level. The parent coordinator monitors this regularly and acts immediately by telephone contact or personal visit when students are absent.

**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 and her assistant schedule a series of bi-weekly subject themes for the purposes of classroom observations. These align to particular professional development topics taught throughout the year. The teachers are made aware of the themes and data learned through classroom observations helps to inform extra professional development sessions. This is over and above weekly, grade level professional development meetings. The assistant principal, academic services leader or literacy coach usually lead the extra professional development. Due to budgetary constraints, the school does not currently have a math coach to provide teachers with professional development. Monthly faculty meetings are conducted to further service professional development. Professional development has not yet been used to develop teachers' understanding of individual learning strategies to enhance achievement.

The working relationship amongst the staff is excellent and this encourages collaborative work. Team building is a strong feature of the school. Staff are comfortable in exchanging data and ideas to maintain high levels of student interest. Effective induction procedures ensure that new staff learn how to achieve the best from their students. Collegiate working is a real strength of the school. The same quality of induction applies to substitute teachers, one of whom stated, "This school is warm and friendly, just like a home."

The inclusion of students from the District 75 School is an example of collaborative work at its best. Not only do the students from both schools get to mix socially and academically but also the understanding of each other's needs are enhanced. Likewise, the schools share support services and expertise. As a result of this seamless interaction, many of the District 75 students excel within the school's general education program.

The introduction of a school website has greatly assisted in the sharing of information and progress to date. The translation of all school letters into a number of different languages is instrumental in the process of keeping parents informed and assisting in helping the school run smoothly. A number of outside organizations continue to support the school in its efforts to maintain high standards. These include, Bergen Beach Youth Organization, Puppetry in Practice and the Johnny Mercer Foundation.

**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 made great strides over the last year to improve its monitoring and revision of plans and goals. The senior leadership team, which includes staff, parents and community members, is responsible for the production of the Comprehensive Education Plan. They have a planned series of meetings throughout the year to reappraise and reassess goals and align them to the school's achievements. These are based on a firm understanding of how data is used to provide realistic and appropriate challenges.

The school is always seeking ways to improve student outcomes. As a result, better understanding of student strengths and weaknesses are highlighted and their goals amended accordingly. The school uses periodic assessments effectively to set and amend interim goals as an indicator of progress towards the achievement of its goals. Teacher conferences take place with the principal, at regular intervals during the school year, where discussion is centered on individual student progress. The use of periodic assessments, at grade level meetings is proving to be a useful tool by which staff are able to rigorously monitor and evaluate progress to date. The detailed itemized data realized from such exercises has been influential in the re-setting and adjustment of goals as the school strives to improve its performance.

There is clear evidence that the different constituents of the school have ownership of its goals and plans and this plays a significant part in the planning cycle. The cycle usually commences after the Christmas break, when the principal and her assistant undertake an in-depth analysis of progress to date. The findings of this exercise inform future planning and are widely used in determining priorities for the coming year.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Mill Basin (PS 236)</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .</b>	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	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .</b>	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 make 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	