



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Park Slope School

Public School 282

**180 6 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11217**

Principal: Magalie Alexis

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Lead Reviewer: Christina Lewis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Park Slope School is an elementary school with 719 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 68% Black, 29% Hispanic, 5% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 4.5% English language learners and 5.7% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 47% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school uses a range of data extremely well to know and understand the needs of each student.
- There is a strong culture of collaboration and teamwork, which has a very positive impact on the work of the school.
- The principal has a strong vision for the future development of the school that is shared by the whole community.
- The school is a positive learning environment that values trust and respect, and actively promotes academic and personal growth.
- The curriculum is excitingly and dynamically organized to enrich and enhance students learning across all subjects.
- Students enjoy school and are fully engaged in their learning.
- Parents are fully supportive and value the high aspirations the school has for its' students, socially and academically.
- The opportunities for personal development are very good and provide many chances for staff to develop their skills and confidence
- The principal has been innovative in creating strong partnerships from the external community that enhance the work of the school.
- Very good use is made of academic support services in supporting the needs of individual students who are causing concern.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop the good work of the inquiry team to gain a clearer understanding of the performance and progress of all students.
- Ensure that students and their parents understand next step goals so that they know exactly what has to be improved and how to achieve this.
- Follow up the many new initiatives by evaluating their impact on teaching and learning in order to identify and build on best practice.

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.

Park Slope Elementary School is an exciting and positive learning environment, which is held in high regard by its community of students, staff and parents. They are unanimous in their praise for the principal who they say is “warm and caring and committed to providing the very best for the students.” Parents are impressed that she knows the names of all of the students and liken the support they receive from the school to being part of an extended family. The curriculum is organized in an exciting and dynamic way and has a very strong focus on the arts. Subjects are linked together innovatively, for example art and technology are planned around the work done in social science. Students enjoy school very much and as a result they are confident and well motivated in their learning. Long and short-term goals are shared regularly with parents. Although students can articulate their goals, they are not always sure of the small steps necessary to achieve them. Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives and in most cases are suitably differentiated to meet the students’ varied needs. There is very good support from the academic intervention team who ensure that struggling students are given programs to assist their learning.

The school is using data very well to understand and meet the needs of students. However it has yet to focus more closely on the progress of all students to ensure that the different groups throughout the school make sufficient progress in relation to prior achievement. The inquiry team has identified two groups of students who are causing concern and has been addressing this. Successful strategies that they are using to improve these students’ rate of progress are shared with all staff. This has contributed to a deeper understanding of what the data is telling them when looked at over time. The school has made good progress since the last Quality Review and is now in a position to monitor and evaluate the impact of the new initiatives, in order to refine and develop further its good practice.

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 continually collects and analyzes a wide range of data very well. The administrative team ensures that the results of state tests, together with all internal assessment data, are presented clearly and the interpretations of what the data means are communicated to staff. As a result teachers throughout the school have a clear and

constantly updated understanding of their students' individual achievements. The teachers use the assessment information very effectively in their planning and instruction to meet the needs of the students. Because of this low-achieving students gain the support they require and high-achieving students are given work that enriches their learning. The progress made by special education students is tracked with equal care. The inquiry team has identified English language learners as a target group. They are developing a range of strategies to support these students in making the required progress. This is being closely monitored and interim assessments indicate that the intervention has been successful. The school is developing its understanding of the progress of the different subgroups within its school population but is in the early stages of relating performance to prior attainment. It makes good comparisons between classes and between students' performance in different subjects, and this information is shared between grades as students move to their next class. This provides a good level of continuity and ensures that instruction is consistently planned around the students' needs.

The school has a good measure of its own performance and progress when compared to similar schools and this has led to an immediate review of the goals for school improvement. As a result of this, strategic goals are now more clearly focused on ensuring successful outcomes for all 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 well-focused action plan detailing strategic goals for whole school improvement is agreed and set by the school cabinet, and these are carefully translated to grade and subject goals. Coaches and teachers meet regularly across grades to establish meaningful goals for individual students. Teachers then draw up action plans that show how they are going to achieve their class goals. Grade and school goals are displayed throughout the school, so the whole school community understands what they are working towards. Teacher assessment and a variety of other assessment tools are used very effectively to measure progress toward meeting these goals. The goals are updated monthly in the common planning meeting and prep times, and shared with the students through individual conferencing sessions. Effective intervention strategies and support are used in targeting underachievement. This is in the form of small group work or extended-day programs. Collaboration is a strong feature of this school. For example, the coaches are working very closely together on underachievement in math. This was identified as an issue by the inquiry team and the coaches have been exploring ways of supporting a group of students who are struggling with some math concepts. The implication of their research is being shared with all staff and has led to a strong focus on the teaching of math skills through the school from kindergarten upwards.

Long and short-term goals are shared regularly with parents. Although students can articulate their goals, they are not always sure of the small steps necessary to achieve them. Parents also indicated that understanding the smaller steps would enable them to give better-focused encouragement and support from home. Parents value the high expectations the school has for its children, both socially and academically. They praise the support of the principal and parent coordinator in their efforts to build a strong family community where all are invited to be learners. "They work hard to reach out to us and involve us in everything the school does. They even help us to learn more!"

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 school has a very good core curriculum that is planned around the needs of the students and is constantly monitored to ensure its effectiveness. Programs are organized in an exciting and dynamic way and have a very strong focus on the arts. Subjects are linked together innovatively, such as working through art and technology to reinforce and enrich understanding in social science. As a result students are thoroughly engaged in their learning and enjoy the many opportunities available to express themselves creatively. Hallways are brightly decorated by many examples of their high-quality artwork. Students are proud of their achievements, particularly in technology where they rapidly learn the skills needed to use this as an effective learning tool. They use PowerPoint presentations on their research for social studies, for instance, to share with the rest of the class. “It is just a great way of learning and makes me love school,” commented one student. After-school programs also offer a wide choice of activities that enrich and enhance the students’ learning. These include music, where students are offered the opportunity to learn an instrument and eventually play in the school band.

Most lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and differentiated group activities and as a result students make good progress towards achieving their goals. The school leaders hold teachers accountable for providing a safe and inclusive environment through frequent lesson observations and the monitoring of students’ work. The principal is passionate in her belief that, “Children and their learning are the main priority in this school.” Because of this, and the highly positive environment of mutual trust and respect, students are very well supported in their personal and academic development.

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 has developed a rigorous program of formal and informal lesson observations by the principal and administrative team. Teachers value the feedback they are given and the level of support to improve their practice. This is particularly so in relation to the use and understanding of data to improve their instruction. The focus on differentiation has made them more aware of the need for careful lesson planning, which some of the newer teachers had found challenging. However they felt the support from the coaches was good. One new teacher said. “It was like a light bulb going on!” The coaches also support teaching by modelling lessons and providing individual professional development designed to meet specific needs. Teachers are actively encouraged to share practice and learn from each other. Planning times are collaborative activities where teachers reflect and evaluate their practice in an open and professional environment. External professional development from high quality providers is planned around individual and school needs. Members of staff share and discuss the content in detail, and strategies identified as relevant and effective are absorbed into school practice.

The school makes good use of the guidance and academic support services that are on site, and recognizes the importance of meeting students’ emotional and personal needs as well as academic needs. As a result, students identified as causing concern are quickly

assessed and strategies are rapidly put in place to support them and their families. The principal has worked very successfully to create strong partnerships with the local community. These include regular financial support from a local councilman, which has been used to improve the amenities in the building and to provide new laptops. Another successful partnership has funded the arts program. These, and many other innovative awards, help the school maintain its aim of creating a school of well-rounded, well-educated students for life in the 21st century.

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 an effective strategic action plan that is derived from the Comprehensive Education Plan and other areas identified for school improvement. There are clear timescales and measurable success criteria that are constantly monitored and revised. As a result, the whole school community not only knows and understands what the goals are but also how well the school is on track to achieve them. The school uses the plan to arrange professional development for improving teacher outcomes and the success of this is monitored frequently. The school also uses a very wide range of information to regularly track students' progress towards achieving their goals. This includes testing, interim assessments and teacher assessments. Although the school is only just beginning to set student goals in relation to prior achievement, this rigorous monitoring ensures that any shortfalls in students' learning are quickly addressed. Equally, the high achievers are placed into enrichment programs to extend their learning. This year, the work of the inquiry team has been instrumental in causing the school to revise its plans and make strategic decisions to improve student outcomes. Plans and goals were revised when math data indicated that a group of students was not making enough progress. As a result, new teaching strategies were introduced to improve the outcomes for these students and others later identified at risk. The school is currently evaluating the impact of these and other initiatives introduced this year. The intention is to use this evaluation as a basis for further improvement in students' learning throughout the school. A cabinet member said, "If data has done one thing it is that we must always get better at what we are doing, to give these kids a flying start." This further indicates the commitment of the staff in doing the very best for the students.

The work of the school is inspired by the passion and determination of the principal, who has a clear vision for what she wants for the students of Park Slope Elementary School. The school community shares this vision and they all know what must be done to bring the vision to reality.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Park Slope Elementary 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