



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Jackie Robinson School

Elementary School 375

**46 McKeever Place
Brooklyn
NY 11225**

Principal: Marion Wilson

Dates of review: May 29 - 30, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Peter Lewis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Jackie Robinson School is an elementary school with 577 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 80% Black, 17% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 89%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 91% eligibility.

The principal was appointed at the start of last academic year. Since then, she has had to put in place a number of systems to ensure that the curriculum aligns with requirements, and the management systems, particularly in the use of data, provide the school with information about its effectiveness.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is an exceptional leader whose strengths in developing people have inspired staff and students and led to rapid change and improvement.
- Data is now collated, analyzed and communicated very well so that patterns of performance are accurately identified and effective action taken.
- The school is good at identifying and supporting its lowest achieving students, so that they make good progress.
- Clarity in planning ensures that all stakeholders are included in the school's strong vision, which promotes a good capacity for further improvement.
- Teamwork and professional trust are strongly developed, so that collaboration is highly effective in identifying areas for improvement.
- Professional development is excellent as a result of leaders' very good response to their understanding of the school's needs and effectiveness.
- Very good systems of monitoring, evaluation and feedback ensure that teachers respond well to the high levels of accountability that are set.
- The tangible sense of pride among teachers and students in being part of the school positively impacts on students levels of motivation.

What the school needs to improve

- Use data consistently to refine lesson planning so aims and strategies fully meet the needs of all groups of students, including higher achievers.
- Involve students more in their learning by developing systems whereby they can identify their own achievement through each lesson.
- Continue to develop curriculum maps so that links between subjects are formally planned and student achievement across subjects assessed.
- Ensure that clear curriculum planning in technology identifies the expected track of progression in students' knowledge, skills and understanding.

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.

Following a period of considerable turbulence in the school's leadership, the principal's drive, vision and very real commitment to staff, students and their parents, has given the school direction and a sense of pride and purpose that were missing before her appointment. The introduction of high-quality systems of monitoring, evaluation and assessment have given the school a clear understanding of where improvement is needed. The principal's considerable skill in motivating people has impacted strongly on staff and students alike. Teachers now feel that they are valued as part of a team. As a result, developments, particularly in the use of student assessment and the curriculum, have been rapid. As data, particularly in reading and math show, these have had a very positive impact on learning and students' engagement. Students and their parents know what they are learning, why, and how their current work moves them towards their goals.

Teachers and school leaders evaluate assessment data systematically to develop a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in student learning. Rigorous systems of monitoring and evaluation have been introduced to drive whole school improvement planning. These are significant improvements since last year's review. Excellent systems of professional development have ensured that improvement matches individual need and potential. The curriculum aligns with requirements. While it is stimulating, some lack of consistency in teachers' skills of differentiation mean that higher achieving students are not always challenged fully. Good developments to the school's use of technology have already made a difference to teachers' confidence in its use, but have yet to be included in the school's recently developed curriculum maps to indicate required progression in students' learning. Precise evaluation of teaching has revealed the need to refine teachers' skills in setting lesson aims that inform the activities planned for students of different abilities. The school's inquiry team is knowledgeable about the progress made by its focus students and demonstrates a real passion for student success. They reflect the teamwork and collegiality that now so strongly characterizes the school's work, together with a very good understanding of the progress of their focus 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 principal has ensured that, over a short period of time, data is collated, analyzed and communicated very well. Leaders compare standardized test results with interim

assessment data, and share outcomes with teachers. Because of this, teachers and support staff understand their students' achievements well, know where weaknesses in learning occur, and are swift to provide suitable help. Academic support services have a thorough knowledge of data and accurately track the achievements of special education students and English language learners. As a result, any slippage in their performances leads to effective interventions. The effectiveness of all these systems is demonstrated in the recent increases in student achievement across the school. Staff training in data analysis has been rapid and effective and is part of the school's monitoring and support systems. Regular data updates support, for example, scheduled discussions that use student assessments as their starting point.

The school makes good use of its analysis of patterns of student achievement over time, and between most groups, subjects, classes and grades, to evaluate progress. The school's identification of the comparative underperformance of boys, for example, led directly to modifications to the resources used in their teaching, with the result that their achievement in reading has risen dramatically. Records of discussion between administrators and teachers clearly show the refined levels of communication that the school has established in understanding and making use of data. The close focus on raising the performance of lower achievers has led to a very strong and effective focus on ensuring these students meet grade expectations. This, together with a lack of specific tracking of gains in achievement for higher achievers, has resulted in a lack of challenge for these 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.

In what staff describe as a 180 degree turnaround from the situation that applied at the principal's appointment, teamwork and strong professional collaboration characterize way in which the school works. Consequently, teachers, support staff and school leaders work very well together in tracking students' strengths and weaknesses, and in planning effective interventions. This is particularly true for the lowest achieving students and those who are causing concern who are well supported and so make good progress. School goals focus strongly on improving practice and the curriculum to secure gains in student learning. The increased knowledge of patterns of student performance provides a strong data component in discussions between leaders and staff. Timescales for completion allow the school to track the rate of change, so that developments in practice, such as the introduction of the Accelerated Reading Program are well understood by staff.

Goals are communicated very clearly to staff and parents so they can work together to help students succeed. Regular discussions between teachers and parents ensure that the school's high expectations of teachers and students are clearly understood. Student achievement targets provide high levels of challenge, and derive from the accurate analysis of data. Teachers describe goals as "projections", such as in reading, where goals relate directly to expected performance levels for each grade. Additionally, because the performance of higher achieving students is well known, the school ensures that reading targets are matched to students' potential. However, in other subjects, goals are set according to grade expectations with the result that teachers' planning does not always challenge higher achieving students fully. Teachers provide effective

support through conferencing in setting goals for students' improvement, which they are able to describe with considerable clarity. Because lesson aims are frequently too broad, students are less able to recognize when they have achieved success in lessons.

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 curriculum is carefully reviewed to ensure requirements are met, and that data enables the school to track student progress. The development of very clear, standards-based curriculum maps ensures that there is a good degree of continuity from pre-kindergarten through grade five. The curriculum is broad and engaging. It includes the arts to enhance learning and this is illustrated in the stimulating displays of students' work that adorn classes and hallways. However, projected developments in technology have yet to be included in curriculum maps, so that the school is not able to check on students' progress. Students are enthusiastic and engaged learners. Leaders use observations and data to assess the effectiveness of programs, and to identify necessary modifications, such as the improved approaches to boys' learning. Very good systems ensure that teachers are well supported in making increasingly good use of student data in their planning. The practice of conferencing and recording of class assessments and other test results is firmly embedded although teachers' are less confident in setting learning objectives that help students in recognizing when they have achieved success. Discussions between coaches, senior leaders and teachers have set a clear sense of accountability among teachers for their students' progress.

Following some initial resistance, teachers have embraced changes to their practice, such as the introduction of accelerated literacy. There is a high degree of consistency in practice following good support and modeling by leaders and coaches. Consequently, groupings are fluid according to students' changing needs. This has been firmly led by the principal who, as one teacher said "...doesn't simply ask us to do something, she does it herself to show us how!" Targeted resource acquisition and the careful deployment of staff with particular skills provide valuable additional support for teachers to improve student performance. The inclusion of differentiated activities in curriculum maps is providing an additional layer of good support. Nonetheless, the school acknowledges that some inconsistencies remain as not all teachers plan instruction confidently to meet students' different abilities. This occasionally limits the challenge that is presented to higher achieving students. The school has clear plans in place to address this weakness.

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 has worked tirelessly to establish a sense of purpose, clear systems and high expectations so the school's vision is firmly set and reflected in practice. She has achieved a great deal with the excellent support of the assistant principals and other senior staff. Staff, who initially viewed her as "another principal who was simply passing through", now have confidence that she is there for them and their students for the long

term. They acknowledge that the strongest driver for change in the school has been the principal's commitment to developing staff and students. This has had a marked impact on developments in teamwork and a shared sense of professional commitment. Whole school strategic planning is clear and linked well to the school's professional development plan. As a result, professional development is, as leaders targeted it, precisely to school and individual needs. The school has well developed strategies for monitoring the quality of instruction and of student learning. At the same time, teachers value the good opportunities that have been provided for them to learn from each others' practice. Data-focused discussion and observation by senior staff have given them an excellent understanding of teachers' effectiveness and, as importantly, of their willingness and ability to improve. Teachers utilize the same teaching and learning standards to evaluate their own practice as those employed by leaders. Consequently, discussions about teaching and its impact on learning are fully informed and effectively secure agreement about best practice. Teachers appreciate the supportive feedback that they receive. They describe with some excitement the ways in which this supports them in improving their craft, while ensuring that the agendas for regular common planning meetings reflect identified needs. Staff regard the principal and assistant principals as being strong and knowledgeable leaders. They have ensured the establishment of a good range of systems so that the school runs smoothly. The school has ensured the development of effective partnerships in providing good support for the curriculum and the community.

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.

Whole school development planning is very detailed and accurately derived from the analysis of data. Additionally, the principal ensures that information from a variety of sources is brought together to identify areas that work well, and where further improvement is required. Staff involvement in this process has developed rapidly, through discussion and good strategies for seeking and acting upon their views. Consequently, staff know their part in securing the school's development, and feel part of the whole school vision. This is a powerful feature, and one that has enabled a rapid transition from being a fragmented community, to being a school with a dynamic sense of purpose and shared pride in achievement. Progress towards whole school goals is tracked carefully. Staff at different levels monitor the progress of newly introduced initiatives so that modifications or additional support can be applied where necessary.

A similar level of rigor helps the school to ensure that student progress moves at planned rates. There is a good range of firmly established assessment systems, which enables teachers and school leaders to track students' progress towards their goals. Teachers' grading, for example, demonstrates the good use of rubrics in assessing students' achievement across subjects, including the arts. The accurate analysis of information from interim testing, for example, enables discussions about possible modifications to be driven by a good understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the school identifies any shortfalls in learning at an early stage and takes effective action to maintain students' progress.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Jackie Robinson 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