



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

PS 106

Elementary School 106

180 Beach 35 Street

Queens

NY 11691

Principal: Marcella Sills

Dates of review: May 7 - 8, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Christina Lewis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 106 is an elementary school with 411 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 78.3% Black, 12.4% Hispanic, 3.6% White, 4.1% Asian and 1.5% American Indian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 78.9% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school uses a wide range of data very effectively to understand the performance and progress of its students.
- Students understand their short- and long-term goals and know what they have to do to reach them.
- The school successfully uses core-curricular approaches that focus on improving learning outcomes for students.
- The principal has high expectations for the personal and academic success of the school that is shared by the school community.
- Very good use is made of academic intervention services and other school-based support services in meeting the needs of the students.
- The school has strong partnerships with outside organizations that offer a wide range of activities to enrich and enhance learning.
- Students are articulate, confident and enjoy their learning.
- Parents value the hands-on approach and accessibility of the principal and staff.
- The school makes good use of technology, smartboards and palm pilots, to support teaching and learning.
- The school is a positive learning environment where trust and respect are highly valued.

What the school needs to improve

- Use information gathered from data to further explore trends and patterns in student performance, including gender issues.
- Develop consistency in teaching and in the use of differentiated activities, across all subjects, to ensure students' active participation and engagement.
- Evaluate the impact of the new curriculum on teaching and learning in order to refine and adapt it to meet students' needs.
- Involve the whole school community in building a vision that fully reflects the school's aims for the academic and personal success of students.

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.

PS 106 has seen many changes in the past two years which has, at times, had a negative impact on the school community. However, the passion and commitment of the principal and her belief in, "Reaching out to help all children become successful learners" has had a positive effect and enabled her to drive forward new initiatives and programs to enhance teaching and learning. The Core Knowledge Program, for example, has united the school community through its exciting content and its active approach to learning. Staff members said, "It's the best thing that has happened and really motivates every one." Evidence of the students' high-quality work from this program is displayed throughout the school and students are very enthusiastic in describing their work. "It's really good to find out about the world and history and stuff," said one student. The school has yet to evaluate the full impact of the program to ensure consistency over time and that student learning builds systematically throughout the school.

The school uses a wide range of data effectively to identify students' needs and track progress. Very good use is made of pupil support services and intervention programs both for underachieving students and for the high achievers. The school is very successful in its support of special education students. As a result, the levels of achievement within the school have consistently improved over the past few years. The school has yet to explore and address the difference in achievement levels between boys and girls. Other core-curricular approaches have been introduced, for example the use of differentiated instruction, and the wider use of technology and the workshop model to actively engage students in their learning. However, despite examples of good practice, these approaches are not yet used consistently throughout the school to provide interesting instruction. As a result, some students are not always actively engaged in their learning. The school has yet to revise and update its aims in order to be a truer reflection of its current work and purpose.

The inquiry team has made a positive start with its research into a target group of underperforming students in English Language arts. Members are enthusiastic about their work and the difference that targeted intervention and diagnostic assessment has made to the group. The team's work has already been identified as having a positive impact on teaching for all students. Plans to share this information with the rest of the staff and look at implications for teaching are already underway.

The school has made good progress since the last Quality Review in addressing the areas for improvement. An effective behavior policy is in place that is used consistently throughout the school. Students and their parents know the short-term goals and how to achieve them, and much greater use is made of diagnostic assessments to effectively identify student need.

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 collects and analyzes a wide range of data very well. The principal and data specialist ensure that the results of State tests, together with interim assessment data, are presented clearly and the interpretations of what the data means are communicated to staff. Consequently, teachers throughout the school have a clear understanding of individual student achievement and the performance of each class and grade. The school places a very strong emphasis on meeting the needs of individual students and has aligned much of the organization of the school and teaching around this. As a result, class sizes are small and there are very good intervention programs in place to support underachieving students. The school is also part of the gifted and talented program and provides suitable enrichment and challenge for these students. The small group of English language learners is equally well supported and, as a result, these students make good progress. The school works very effectively with the small group of special education students to ensure that they have the right support to enable them to access learning and meet their individual education plan targets. The school has yet to fully explore the differences in the performance of boys and girls. A closer analysis of data at the beginning of the year revealed that not all students made adequate progress. This served as a wake-up call for the principal who, because of this, has put mechanisms in place to effectively track students' progress throughout the school. The school compares itself with similar schools and the principal has used this information to set relevant improvement goals for the school.

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.

Student progress is discussed regularly and the school's well-developed analysis of data is used to identify student goals. Coaches ensure that a close focus is kept on individual student's progress and provide good support. Regular meetings across subjects and grades ensure that goals are constantly reviewed and revised. Intervention and support are planned flexibly around identified need and are constantly refined to meet the particular needs of students. For example, the extended-day program is used for short-term focused intervention, which is very flexible in its approach and content. The school also uses a wide range of services within the school day to support learning. The administrative team constantly monitors the tracking and progress of all students through a wide variety of assessment programs. Consequently, the progress of each student is tracked very thoroughly and all groups receive the support needed to achieve their goals. The inquiry team has used diagnostic assessments to target a group of underachieving students in English Language Arts and, as a result of planned interventions, these students are making better progress. This work encourages collaboration and has strengthened professional relationships and teamwork within the school community.

Goals set for student achievement are based on the acquisition of skills in math and English language arts. The school communicates these well to parents so that they are readily able to help their children succeed. Monthly reports keep parents updated about their children's progress. "Staff are always very approachable and willing to listen and help," said one parent. The parent coordinator provides a good link with parents and has worked hard to ensure that there is an effective home/school partnership. Consequently, the parents are beginning to understand why change is necessary in order to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to reach their potential. The students have a good understanding of their individual goals. Their teachers help them, through regular conferencing and assessments, to identify the steps they need to take to achieve the goals.

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 proficient.

The school has recently reviewed and changed its curriculum in order to comply with State requirements and to ensure the content is more compelling and relevant to the learner. The introduction of the Core Knowledge Program has had a positive impact on the whole school community. Staff, students and parents are all inspired by the potential of the broad and varied cross-curricular content. "Makes learning such fun," said a student. However the program's success has yet to be fully evaluated to ensure consistency over time and the systematic building of learning across grades and subjects. Alongside this, the school is also developing the workshop model of instruction and the use of differentiated activities to meet the needs of the learners. However, despite examples of good practice, these approaches are not used consistently, which reduces students' active engagement in their learning. Similarly staff confidence in the use of smartboards is in early stages of development and this equipment has yet to be embedded into consistent practice. Staff in the early childhood center are competent in their use of palm pilots to effectively monitor and assess students' work.

Budgeting has been used effectively to organize resources and staffing to meet the school's goals. As a result, class sizes are small and coaches employed for their different expertise allow for flexibility in organization and management. The school uses effective procedures to encourage and monitor attendance, which have yielded an increase in attendance over the past year. The principal has worked hard to ensure that the school supports the personal, as well as academic, success of the students and effective use is made of the school counselor in addressing areas of concern. As a result, students feel safe and well-supported.

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 good strategies in place to monitor the quality of teaching. The principal and coaches regularly observe lessons during weekly learning walks and provide constructive feedback. The teachers value the feedback and acknowledge that it is

really helpful in improving their practice. The coaches also support teaching by modeling lessons and providing individual professional development designed to meet specific needs. Professional development workshops that are closely aligned to the school's goals for improvement are held regularly. Planning times are collaborative activities in which teachers reflect and evaluate their practice in an open and professional environment. The principal said, "Giving teachers a voice in their professional development is one of our strengths." Teachers acknowledge this and, as a result, are more confident in adapting their teaching styles to meet the needs of the learners as well as taking on the extensive new curriculum program. New teachers have an intensive induction program and are well supported by a mentor. Because of this, they quickly become effective in their roles and feel part of the team.

The school makes very good use of the academic intervention service and other school-based support services to ensure the personal and academic needs of the students are being met. The pupil personnel team meets regularly to discuss students that are at risk and to provide effective intervention and support. This process has been particularly effective in ensuring that special education students have access to teaching programs and support that will allow them to be successful in their learning. The aim is to integrate them fully into mainstream classes by the time they leave PS 106.

The school has developed strong partnerships with outside organizations that offer a range of activities to enrich and enhance learning. These include a performing arts-based program, which offers students opportunities in theater and dance skills and a grant that has been used successfully to improve the use of technology throughout the school.

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 a strategic action plan derived from the Comprehensive Education Plan that prioritizes goals for school improvement. This is reviewed and updated regularly to ensure the school is on track to achieve its goals. Where necessary, modifications are made and plans are adjusted. Teachers' plans are also monitored and adapted in the same way. Consequently this ensures the ongoing progress of students towards achieving their long-term goals.

The school uses a significant number of assessment materials and diagnostic tools, as well as teachers' assessment of individual portfolios, to track student progress. A wide range of intervention programs is used to address student needs identified by assessments. These include small group teaching and an effective after-school and extended-day intervention program. Many new initiatives have been introduced, including the new curriculum. The impact of this on teaching and learning has yet to be fully reviewed and evaluated in order to refine and embed into school practice. The school's leadership recognizes that they have plenty of evidence to be able to do this, but have yet to be more effective in their overall evaluation of goals to improve students' learning. The principal has a clear vision for the future development of the school, but this has yet to be formally developed in consultation with the whole school community to reflect its current aims and mission.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: PS 106	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