



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Lyndon B Johnson School**

**Elementary School 223**

**125-20 Sutphin Boulevard**

**Queens**

**NY 11434**

**Principal: Deborah Otto**

**Dates of review: April 9 – 11, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: David Wynford Jones**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Lyndon B Johnson is an elementary school with 707 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 82% Black, 9% Hispanic, 1% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.2%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 71% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal provides very good leadership and is effective in empowering her staff.
- The administration effectively monitors the work of teachers and deploys them well so that the needs of the students are served.
- School leaders use data well to discuss students' progress towards achieving their goals.
- Staff work together well and are committed to ensuring the students feel safe, are happy and do well.
- The administration and staff contribute to the identification of professional development needs for the community of learners.
- Special education students in the contained classes make good progress based on their starting points and needs because they receive effective support.
- There are good systems in place to assess and identify the needs and the support required for English language learners.
- The rich curriculum is enhanced effectively through additional activities and the employment of subject specialists in music, art and gym.
- Older students care for and support younger members of the school community in their academic and social development.
- The school environment has been improved considerably, thus creating surroundings where teachers and students want to be.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the systems for analyzing the achievement and progress of students below grade 3.
- Extend the analysis of data to include groupings by ethnicity so that issues of underperformance are identified and addressed.
- Build on the strategies already in place to achieve greater consistency in the use of data to inform differentiated instruction.
- Ensure teachers consolidate and extend the students' knowledge and understanding by including differentiated questioning during their instruction.
- Further develop links with similar schools to share and promote good practice.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

Lyndon B Johnson School makes a real difference to the lives of its students. This is because the principal sets high expectations for the students and effectively promotes the all-round development of the students. She empowers her staff to take responsibility and has promoted an ethos of collegiality and trust. Significant improvements made to the school environment signal that people matter and are valued. Systems for recording and analyzing students' achievements and for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are in place. The school is beginning to use these effectively to quicken the rate of students' progress. However, these are better established in the older grades. The school analyzes data to establish general trends and patterns and to set goals. Careful analysis of the achievements of special education students and English language learners has helped to identify the next steps for their learning. However, the school does not analyze data for other groupings, including ethnic groups, to the same degree. Consequently, there are potentially groups of students who are underachieving. Some inconsistencies remain in using data to inform instruction and in the teachers' ability to ask questions which promote differentiation.

Staff work together well in their grade and all stakeholders contribute to identifying professional development needs. Teachers in grades 3 through 5 liaise regularly. Consequently, there is greater curriculum continuity for the older students as they move from grade to grade. This enables them to make better progress. Displays of students' work in the classrooms and around the school reflect a rich and stimulating curriculum with a good emphasis on mandated requirements. The school enhances the curriculum effectively by a number of additional activities both within and outside the school day. The employment of specialist teachers for art, music and gym support the instruction and interest in these subjects. This helps to ensure the students appreciate their school and attendance is also improving as a result. Older students take the responsibility for supporting younger students in learning to read seriously. This contributes effectively to the students' personal development and social awareness.

The inquiry team meets on a regular basis. Meetings are focused and concentrate on the needs of special education students who are not meeting their reading goals. Views of all members of the team are valued as suggestions for alternative support strategies are considered. The team is currently reviewing its impact on the students and is in the process of identifying strategies which have promoted learning.

The administration has not fully addressed all the areas for improvement from the last review. The most significant area relates to the analysis of data by ethnic grouping. However, the school has made progress in involving students in assessing their own learning and in the collection and use of data. The school has made significant improvements in identifying professional development based on the analysis of data.

## **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 proficient.**

There are appropriate systems for recording and monitoring students' achievement based on official testing and teacher assessments. Systems are better established from grade 3 upwards than in the lower grades. The assessment data includes comments from the parents, teacher assessment and, if appropriate, information from the previous school. The information identifies those students requiring extra help well and those who are potentially high achievers. The school also uses data appropriately to allocate students to their next class. School and end-of-grade results are analyzed adequately to identify overall areas of strength and those for further development. In some cases, for example special education students and those who are English language learners, teachers do this well. Teachers also analyze test results in detail to identify the exact areas of strength and weakness. In the six self-contained classes, teachers evaluate student progress carefully against their individual education plans. However, in contrast, the school does not analyze the data by ethnic or other groupings with sufficient rigor. Consequently, the school is not in a position to identify specific groups who may be under achieving.

The administration adequately monitors the work of the school against similar schools. Although the principal has undertaken visits to two of these schools, this aspect of the school's work is still at an early stage of development. As a result, the administration is not able to capitalize on the practice in the other schools to support school improvement. Ongoing training for members of the administration in using and analyzing data is shared with staff. As a result, teachers are developing and refining their knowledge, use and understanding of the data to inform planning and instruction, but teachers' understanding of data to inform instruction is not consistent throughout 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 proficient.**

The administration meet regularly to monitor and evaluate the progress of grades and individual students. This information is shared with grade leaders and coaches who use it effectively to inform grade meetings. Detailed discussion clarifies students' progress and there is careful consideration of suggestions for alternative interventions. This is particularly so for special education students identified by the inquiry team. Teachers monitor students attending the self-contained classes carefully to ensure they meet their diverse needs. Consequently, these students fit well into the school and want to learn. The achievement of the small number of English language learners is analyzed meticulously to ensure that their precise needs are being met. As a result, these students gain a good understanding of the English language and use it confidently in every-day life. The administration's goal to improve the school environment for learning and for improving facilities for the all-round development of each student are well known to staff, parents and students. However, the administration's goal for students' academic development is not as clear. As a result, although the principal has high expectations of students, the expectations of some staff and parents' are not high enough. However, they believe the

performance of the students is at an acceptable level. The administration is addressing this issue through individual discussions with members of staff and providing opportunities for parents to attend workshops, consultation evenings, and through presentations by, and discussions with, key members of staff. The school provides good opportunities for exchange of information between teachers and parents. Parents spoke highly of the administration and how they now feel welcome in the school. They say that teachers are available for consultation, want to know about their children and respect parents' views.

**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 rich and exciting, engaging the students. Displays of student work in the classrooms and around the school reflect a broad curriculum with links being made between subjects. Grade 1 students researched and made models of the solar system and wrote about it in reasonable detail. Throughout the school, there is a strong focus on the basic skills in literacy and in math. Where appropriate, these are being reinforced through other lessons. The school enhances the curriculum effectively by a wide range of activities within and outside the school day. Some activities are specifically organized for students who find learning difficult. Others are open to all students. Students respond positively to these initiatives and want to take part.

Teachers throughout the school work well together in their grades. However, the links between grades 3, 4 and 5 are stronger than those in the earlier grades, making curriculum continuity and progression better. This helps students make better progress in these grades. A comparison of the end-of-grade results in math and in English language arts from one year to the next shows a steady pattern of improvement. Students, with the exception of the grade 5 higher-achievers in English language arts, make steady progress from one grade to the next. Progress in math tends to be better than in English language arts because many students, particularly the boys, are having difficulties in reading. The vast majority of the teachers use a range of tests and ongoing assessments effectively to identify students' achievement and to track their progress toward their goals. The school groups students for math and English language arts, based on the students' achievements and needs. Teachers review the composition of the groups regularly as the students gain new skills and knowledge. Most teachers use data to understand student need and provide the students with work which generally matches well to their needs, ability and levels of understanding. This sustains their interest and promotes a desire for learning. However, this is not consistent practice throughout the school.

The principal has developed an atmosphere of collegiality and mutual trust amongst staff where all views are valued. In turn, this supports respect and trust between students. The budget is used effectively to employ quality staff and to improve resources for instruction and learning. The principal's good knowledge of the strengths of each member of staff means that they are scheduled for maximum impact. There are good systems in place to monitor attendance and lateness. This has contributed to improvements in the attendance rate and in punctuality.

**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 administration monitors instruction on a regular basis through a series of formal and informal visits. Teachers are aware of the focus of observations and receive detailed oral and written feedback. As a result, all parties are clear about the purpose and the expected outcomes. This is leading to a greater consistency in the quality of instruction and in the sharing of good practice in grade meetings. However, there remain some inconsistencies in the teachers' skills in using data to inform instruction and also in their ability to ask questions which promote differentiation. Following observations, when appropriate, the literacy and math coaches effectively support teachers. Teachers are encouraged to undertake intervisitations and to identify and attend professional development sessions in order to share or extend their professional skills and expertise. This is having a positive effect on teachers' morale and is also leading to improvements in instruction. Staff who are new to the school are given good support by a mentor and their colleagues. This enables them to become part of the team quickly.

Systems for ensuring the school runs smoothly are well established. Day-to-day procedures are clear and understood by all staff and students. All staff meet together on a regular basis for general briefings and training. In addition, careful scheduling of teachers' instruction sessions ensures they meet in their grade teams to undertake joint planning and to review data. The morning tannoy announcements, made by the students, give an update on the days' events, pose a research question for their peers and give the answer to the previous day's challenge. This strategy effectively encourages students' participation in their school and helps them to become researchers who enjoy learning. The responsibility that older students take to reading for younger students contributes positively to their personal development and social awareness.

**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 proficient.**

The school has suitable plans for improving students' outcomes. However, key information in the Comprehensive Education Plan is not easily accessible. The plan does not contain a brief overview statement summarizing the key developmental priorities or how they were identified. There is no clear cross reference to the data, making the plan more difficult to monitor than it might be. The school sets realistic teacher and student goals with clearly identified time scales. These goals are reviewed periodically with necessary adjustments being made. This ensures the students continue to make progress. Assessment data is used well to support students who find learning difficult and for English language learners. Systems for interim evaluations are developing well. They are better established in the upper grades and teachers use more effectively to support learning.

All stakeholders share the principal's vision for the development of the school. They are fully aware of the plans to improve the environment and to promote students' all-round development. However, stakeholders do not understand the ambitious academic goals to the same degree. Nevertheless, staff, parents and students appreciate the ongoing developments in the school. Several commented that the school environment and the ethos have changed significantly for the better over the last few years, leading to students who want to attend school and rising attendance.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Lyndon B Johnson School</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>			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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			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	
<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 and tardiness?				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, 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	
<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 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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>