



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

George F. Bristow

Elementary School 134

**1330 Bristow Street
Bronx
NY 10459**

Principal: Kenneth Thomas

Dates of review: October 23 - 24, 2007

Lead Reviewer: John Collings

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

George F. Bristow is an elementary school with 659 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 46% Black, 54% Hispanic, 0% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Good use of data ensures the school constantly updates its knowledge of the performance and progress of all groups of students including those in need.
- As a result of a broad and stimulating curriculum, there is a good climate for learning.
- There is good professional development through classroom observations, intervisitations and the use of data to plan challenging lessons.
- There is increased staff stability that is enabling the school to implement its goals effectively.
- Students are supported well both academically and personally because staff know them very well.
- Students like learning, enjoy school and want to do well.
- All staff are held fully accountable for the performance and progress of their students.
- Good professional development, in differentiation and planning that links subjects together, is having a positive impact on students' performance.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the use of differentiated planning and teaching to ensure all students make the best possible progress.
- Ensure expectations for student progress are consistently shared with students and parents.
- Consolidate the many innovations the school has adopted into a school development plan so that goals are clearly understood by all.

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 proficient.

There is a good climate for learning in the school. Classes are stimulating so that students like learning, enjoy school and want to do well. The strong drive to improve student performance through using data is effective in monitoring students' progress. As a result, data identifies the next steps that students need to take in order to improve. There is some use of differentiation to engage and challenge students in learning based securely on their prior achievements, but not enough yet. The school has put in place effective professional development to begin to meet this need. It also gives training in linking subjects together, which is having a positive impact on students' performance.

Staff know their students very well and teachers and services support students very effectively, both academically and personally. All staff are held accountable for the performance and progress of their students. The school is aware that it needs to share the school's high expectations consistently with students and parents.

School goals are generally understood but are not recorded in ways that are easy for the school community to access. Monitoring of progress towards them is generally informal. However, increased staff stability is enabling the school to implement its goals more effectively.

The inquiry team has been convened and has made some progress in choosing students to monitor, and in finalizing the nature of any additional interventions necessary to support them. Since the last review, the school has made significant improvements in the use of data to identify the progress of different groups of students. It has implemented good professional development to enable staff to use this information effectively.

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 has made good progress since the last review and now has a significant amount of well-organized data on the performance and progress of each student, classroom and grade. There are also very comprehensive ongoing assessments of students by teachers who, as a result, know their students very well.

Special education students are continually monitored through good ongoing assessments. This ensures they meet their individual education plans and are given the support to which they are entitled and additional support to make sure they make the best possible progress. This is given through academic intervention services to English language

learners who are “proficient” but are not yet confident users of English, enabling them to make even better progress.

When the school compares the progress of boys and girls and ethnic groups, no pattern emerges. However, data is very well used to identify higher achieving students and strategies are in place to challenge and maintain their interest and involvement. Data is also used well to compare past and current performance of classrooms, grades and subject areas. This has resulted in programs to improve reading and writing and these are having a beneficial impact on student performance.

Good professional development is planned around the needs of teachers in interpreting State data, as well as their own ongoing data, to individualize instruction to improve students’ performance and progress. This is having a positive impact on raising expectations and identifying targets for students to achieve.

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.

Many grades use common planning time effectively to identify where value-added growth is taking place in the grade, as well as in each classroom. This information is used to make predictions about students’ future growth and to set expectations for the next marking period, semester or the year as appropriate. Progress towards them is then monitored. The school has also used data well to identify the proficient, but not yet confident, English language learners and is reviewing how it can best support these students so they can demonstrate their full potential effectively. However, data could be used more effectively to define students’ instructional level based on prior achievement and then to differentiate instruction even more effectively to meet their needs.

Special education students are identified early so that they receive support through a range of services before school, after school and Saturday programs as well as mandated support and academic intervention services where appropriate. These students are mainstreamed wherever possible in subjects where they are more proficient.

There is a strong commitment by all staff to improve student performance and progress across the school, but whole school goals are not well articulated to ensure they are understood by all. Expectations of students are high, and parental expectations reflect those of the school. The school struggles to involve a large number of parents in the education of their children, even though information about students’ progress is given to them. The sharing of the goals for students’ future progress is inconsistent because the school is reviewing different methods before implementing an agreed whole school approach.

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 curriculum adopted by the school creates a range of data that is systematically recorded by teachers and used to make ongoing adjustments to their teaching. This data is used well in common planning time and grade meetings to monitor whether students are on track to meet the individual goals the teachers have set.

The curriculum is broad and engaging and there is a good emphasis on art, science and physical education both within and outside the school day. Teachers are increasingly adopting an integrated curriculum where cross-curricular planning identifies where the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one subject can be applied and consolidated in another, thus enhancing learning.

There is an extended curriculum in order to help students in need of support. For example, there are additional classes before school starts and for two hours at the end of the school day. Additionally, there is also a good range of extra-curricular activities such as dance, sports, art, music and homework help.

Teachers are accountable for the academic growth of their students and in the main make instruction interesting and engage students well. However, the degree to which teachers implement differentiated instruction in their classes varies and is not yet consistent. Overall, there is a good climate for learning.

The school has used its budget to enrich students' experiences. For example, there are two specialist art, science and physical education teachers and an additional councilor. This ensures that there is a stimulating curriculum staffed by specialists and that students' personal development is supported well. Overall, there is mutual trust between students, and between staff and students. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. Procedures for monitoring attendance and tardiness are effective but the school has a significant number of students who are taken out of school for long-term absences.

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.

There are frequent classroom observations. These are used very systematically to devise professional development, that is differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers, or groups of teachers. Good support for teachers new to the profession enables them to become reflective about the effectiveness of their teaching and so improve student performance and growth.

Staff are supported well through opportunities for intervisitations to each other's classes, model lessons and examples of good practice in order to improve instruction through, for example, greater differentiation and integrated curricular planning. Teachers find this approach extremely valuable and informative. It is having a significant impact as teachers become increasingly proficient in using data to identify student needs, and get to grips with planning differentiated work that is firmly based on students' prior achievement.

The school runs well because good systems are in place. There is significantly improved staff stability, which means that professional development fully benefits the school. Consequently, there is a more consistent approach to teaching and learning and an ability to implement goals effectively.

Students are very well supported through services including an additional councilor at the school's expense. This is a significant asset as it enables the school to address any issues arising with students and parents promptly. Students are very well known to teachers, which ensures they are supported well both academically and personally. There are effective links with outside entities to build further upon this process.

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 principal and cabinet have a clear vision for the school. There are overall goals, such as improving student performance by 5% per grade, and ensuring all students, including special education and English language learners, make at least annual yearly progress. These are translated into class targets and individual targets for students. The school is also clear that this is to be accomplished through increased differentiation, monitoring of students progress towards these targets and improved integrated curriculum planning. However, although the progress towards school goals is being monitored through cabinet meetings, and common planning time with teachers, interim goals are less clear and so the monitoring towards them is not as rigorous.

The goals for the improvement of teacher outcomes are also monitored at the whole school level and data is used well to track outcomes through periodic assessments. However, although overall school goals are very clear, they are not articulated formally through, for example, a school development plan in which goals, means, time-frames and interim expectations of progress are identified, so enabling the success of plans and interventions to be monitored effectively and shared with all interested parties.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: George F. Bristow Elementary School	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?			X		
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?			X		
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?			X		
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
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?			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?				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 make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X		