



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

PS 6: Lillie Deveraux Blake

02M006

**45 East 81st Street
New York City
NY 10028**

Principal: Lauren Fontana

Dates of review: April 11 -12, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Debra Freeman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 6, Lillie Deveraux Blake School is an elementary school with 812 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 8% Hispanic, 68% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 1.8% English language learners and 19.2% special education students. Boys account for 53.8% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46.2%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.36%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes strategic use of her budget in order to align the school's instructional goals to the needs of all students.
 - The principal identifies rigor in instruction as long-term goals for the school. She hires coaches to support teacher teams in designing standards-aligned curricula and ongoing assessments to raise the rigor for all learners. As a result, running records and ongoing assessments reflect consistent progress in the reading levels of all learners.
 - Professional development supports aligning writing assessments to the school's instructional focus on writing fluency. A staff developer worked with the Writing Inquiry team to design a writing continuum, increase one-on-one conferencing, and set individualized goals for all students. This leads to exemplary work products and improved scores on writing assessments.
- School leaders and teacher teams consistently gather, analyze, and share student performance data that impacts instructional decisions and aligns assessments at the school and classroom level.
 - Teacher teams track progress from a range of data to determine the effectiveness of instructional decisions. After learning that high-performing readers made no progress, teacher teams did a line item analysis and adjusted curricula to focus on mastering inference and interpretation. In addition, the school reevaluated classroom libraries to better suit advanced readers. As a result, assessment scores for the skills targeted improved.
 - Teacher teams consistently implement a range of assessments to track student progress and adjust instruction. Teams administer baseline writing assessments accompanied by rubrics and benchmark writing samples to monitor progress, and identify areas for improvement. This results in improved writing products and students consistently exceeding their goals.
- School leaders provide multiple professional development opportunities and actionable feedback from observations to support faculty in reflecting upon instruction.
 - The school's instructional goals: rigorous and differentiated curricula for all learners, and increasing writing fluency are understood by all faculty and supported in inquiry teams by the school's coaches. This results in ongoing professional growth and a reflective faculty.
 - In order to advance the school-wide instructional vision for rigor, the principal created a structure to meet mid-year with teachers to: reflect upon instruction; identify goals for improvement; and analyze student performance data. This structure leads to instructional change, "Lauren forced us to be more transparent with kids," and teachers are taking the lead in their professional growth by conducting learning walks.

- Leadership and faculty effectively target performance trends so that instructional practices support all learners and lead to student engagement.
 - Based on a range of data, the principal identified writing fluency as a school-wide goal with an entry point -“volume” - and a move away from “overscaffolding.” In the upper grades, students have personalized goals specific to need. As a result, “students can sustain it, even in kindergarten,” writing skills sharply improved, and students express appreciation for “their” writing time.
 - Teacher teams use data to differentiate instruction for high performing and struggling students. In one math classroom students work with difficult problems that push them to be more analytical. Decisions are based on assessment data and students articulate the purpose for working this way. This results in increased performance on math assessments.
- Parents collectively praise the many ways they are informed of the school's academic expectations, their children's progress, and the opportunities provided for their participation in decision-making.
 - Parents receive information about their students' academic progress in Progress Reports, and ongoing email or phone communications with teachers. One parent noted that when “reports arrive, there are “no surprises” because communications are ongoing. Thereby, parents are kept current on academic expectations.
 - Parents are actively involved in the school's decision-making (e.g. the Executive Board, the Wellness Committee). It is because of their efforts that Assistant Teachers are hired to support their children in meeting academic expectations. Thereby, parents are deeply committed participants in the school's instructional vision.
- The school environment embodies a culture of trust and safety, and, in all students, a profound desire to learn.
 - “My son walks around this school like he owns it.” Students feel safe and parents assert that teachers “are very much in control of this safe environment.” Issues are handled quickly and decisively and this results in “a platform for our kids to grow socially and emotionally” as evidenced in parents increased satisfaction on the learning environment survey. Additionally, students comfortably and consistently confer with adults in classrooms to ask questions, or to get assistance. Therefore, students remain actively engaged in learning and show consistent academic progress.
- The school has structures for evaluating the impact of curricular and instructional decisions on student learning and regularly adjusts them to increase the coherence of school-wide practices.
 - Based on ongoing performance data, teams differentiate instruction to increase rigor for every student. Systems for tracking progress impact instructional decisions at the classroom-level and are understood by all faculty. The kindergarten team's two-year inquiry into aligning reading,

writing, and math instruction to learning outcomes for first graders leads to instructional coherence and improved student performance.

- Over a four-month period, coaches and teachers studied the expectations of the new Common Core State Standards and grade teams looked at student work. The goal is to “lift the level” of student writing and to identify determine what “good writing” looks like in each grade. This targeted focus results in more rigorous curricula monitored by increased informal observations to evaluate impact on student performance.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand upon the emerging work of creating comprehensive curricula aligned to the new Common Core State Standards (CCLS) in order to sharpen the school’s instructional coherence.
 - While teachers work effectively in teams to align curricula to the CCLS and to differentiate practice, work that supports higher order thinking is not consistent across grades, thus, limiting the opportunity to challenge all learners
 - Although teachers implement “station” activities in order to address the needs of varied learners, the timing for activities is uneven and not all students benefit. In addition, texts are not consistently matched to students’ levels and, therefore, opportunities for ELLs, students with disabilities, and high performers to be challenged are inconsistent.
- Sharpen and expand upon differentiated practices on order to reflect the faculty’s growing understanding of the complex nature of individual learners.
 - While teachers are attempting to push high performing students to engage in text-based discussions, results are uneven. While this practice could lead to greater student engagement, it is unclear how the differentiated groupings moved students to deeper comprehension of text.
 - Students, parents and their teachers understand school-wide instructional goals. In several classrooms specific goals were in evidence. However, there is no evidence that this leads students independently monitoring their progress or contributing questions for further exploration, thus, limiting opportunities for higher order thinking.
- Provide professional development opportunities that encourage teachers to reflect upon practice, revise curricula to school-wide goals and students’ need, in order to become leaders in school-wide instructional decisions.
 - While leaders have a strong instructional vision and coaches support this with teachers, adult learners come to new ways of working in different strategies. There is no consistent evidence that professional development is differentiated, consequently, opportunities for teachers to take the lead in instructional decisions that raise the academic stakes are inconsistent.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: PS 56 Lillie Deveraux Blake School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				X
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?				X
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?				X

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.

<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?				X
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				X
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				X

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				X
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				X
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X	
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X	
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?				X
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?				X
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X	

Quality Review Scoring Key

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------