



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Jacob Blackwell School

Q111

**37-15 13th Street
Queens
NY 11101**

Principal: Randy Seabrook

Dates of review: February 9-10, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Sarah Goodman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Jacob Blackwell is an elementary and intermediate school with 447 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 39% Black, 48% Hispanic, 6% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 91.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders promote structures to support distributed leadership through inquiry teams that study and raise student progress.
 - In response to an identified weakness across the grades, the school has a core inquiry team from a range of grade levels that meets weekly to examine student progress on writing. Each member collaboratively responds to the identified student writing needs through a close examination of work collected from selected students who represent typical progress for the class. Each member of this core team also facilitates an additional grade specific inquiry team ensuring that all teachers in the school are involved in reviewing student work to adjust their instructional literacy plans leading to writing that is more specific, grammatically correct, and logically structured.

- School leaders create a positive culture toward learning that leads to personal growth for students.
 - The school has created a number of structures to make sure that students are well known and that their social and emotional learning is supported. The middle school advisory program utilizes a wide range of school staff to allow groups to have no more than eight or nine students. The school also develops a strong network of additional youth supports for students through partnerships that include the Open Heart/Open Mind program and City Year. Students strongly express that they feel the school teachers and faculty care about their academic and emotional needs leading to a school that is conducive to learning.

- School leaders and faculty engage students and families in an exchange of information around student progress that promotes regular avenues to track academic progress.
 - The school has a unified system for students to set and record their learning goals. These goals are either posted in the classrooms or found within the teacher's data binders. The teachers also keep track of student progress by using established reading and math programs and use this information to communicate with parents and students through conferences, progress reports, and phone calls to support increased student and family participation in student progress.
 - The school faculty promotes ARIS Parent Link by using grant money to provide in-school computers and a printer for ARIS only use that parents often use. The parent coordinator also provides frequent support and trainings on ARIS. These efforts lead to an increased family participation in improving student performance through their better understanding of the standards their child needs to meet.

- Individual teachers and teacher teams use a range of data to adjust instructional decisions to promote individual and sub-group academic progress.
 - The school identifies key standards in reading, writing, and math and tracks student progress through examining Periodic Assessments, text book and computer program assessments, and teacher created assessments. The AIS team and school faculty pay particular attention to the progress English language learners, Special Education, and African-American students are making on these assessments and have been motivated by this information to make programmatic changes that better meet the needs of these students.
 - The data collected by school faculty is used to determine differentiated tasks for many students in groupings that are flexible within the classroom and during AIS time allowing struggling students to work on foundational skills while students at or above grade level are provided opportunities to progress as well.
- School leadership evaluates and adjusts the curriculum to increase coherence around standards that better meet the learning needs of their students.
 - After identifying writing as an area of concern for their students, the school made a unified commitment to the Common Core State Standards for writing. The integration of the Common Core State Standards into their inquiry work has led to unified instructional practices across classrooms and grades.

What the school needs to improve

- Promote greater consistency across the school in the development and implementation of teaching strategies so that classroom instruction meets the varied needs of all students and facilitates the production of meaningful work.
 - All students are involved in flexible groupings, but the frequency and effectiveness of the groupings and their tasks varies. For example, some integrated co-teaching teams (ICT) work together daily to differentiate tasks for their students while other ICT teams are not effectively working with small groups of students limiting their potential for learning opportunities.
 - The school has made the integration of technology into the curriculum a way to reach students. Pilot projects in social studies in the elementary school are developing challenging projects including blogs, cartoons, and videos. However, the higher order questions and creative instructional practices included in these pilot projects are not consistently found across other grades and classes resulting in lower levels of student engagement.
- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams and professional development to make adjustments that support student progress. (5.4)

- While all teachers are in inquiry groups, grade level teams, and a wide range of professional development, the school leaders do not have a system for regularly evaluating the progress of this work and redirecting teacher efforts to better target the school's learning goals.
- Improve the achievement of learning goals by strategically tracking student progress at the school and grade level to improve student outcomes.
 - While the school faculty is committed to using Periodic Assessment and other data to track student progress, the less frequent benchmarks for reviewing and adjusting school-wide plans in the areas of math and classroom climate slow progress in these areas.
 - Teachers communicate with parents about student progress via letters home, meetings, and phone calls. However, this communication is inconsistent across the faculty and not tracked at a teacher or school level making it hard to monitor the success of this outreach.
- Realign the use of school resources, particularly in the middle school, to improve instruction and meet student needs to increase achievement.
 - The school has a well distributed AIS program and has brought in a variety of grant money. However, the classroom space and technology resources have not been directed to engaging the middle school students or reducing their class size thus affecting their learning progress.
 - The use of teacher and student time is inconsistently structured to respond to the learning needs of all students affecting the ability to engage students in higher order thinking skills, particularly in some of the K-8 math classes and in some of the middle school ICT classrooms.
- Extend the focus of the school's professional development plan to better target the school's learning goals and the needs of individual teachers.
 - Faculty discusses pedagogy primarily within inquiry and grade level groups. While the school-wide inquiry groups are using student work to review and adapt teacher practice, their focus for the year on writing does not promote a regular look at math, a learning goal as well.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Jacob Blackwell 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
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