



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

P226 Manhattan

Public School 226

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New York
NY 10003**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P226 Manhattan is a special education cluster school which comprises seven units housed in community buildings and schools. The school serves students from 2.9 through 21 years old who have a range of diagnosed difficulties and disabilities including autism, emotional disabilities, mild and moderate cognitive learning difficulties, language delay, hearing impairments, and physical disabilities. There are 256 students enrolled, 40% of whom are Hispanic, 40% Black, 13% White and 7% who are from other backgrounds, including Asian. Approximately 12% of the students are English language learners. Attendance for the last academic year was 86%. The school has a relatively stable well-qualified teaching team. In 2005 approximately 87% of the students took the New York State alternate assessments, and the others all required accommodations in the New York State tests.

Educational programs provided by the different sites for students are as follows: elementary to high school students whose primary diagnosed disability is autism; pre-kindergarten students with developmental delays; elementary to high school students whose primary diagnosed disability is autism, and for whom a higher level curriculum is appropriate; an inclusion program for elementary to high school students who can work with greater independence in a general education setting; elementary and middle school students whose academic and social functioning is below their age level, and who are emotionally disturbed, have low cognitive ability and/or have learning disabilities; a deaf/hearing impaired program in an elementary school for students who are diagnosed as being deaf or hard of hearing; and a university inclusion program, with support as necessary, for students who have moved on from their inclusive high school sites.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school gathers a wide range of data in order to build accurate student profiles, which are used to inform the planning of activities to extend learning.
- The school provides a variety of carefully developed inclusion opportunities for its students so that they can participate in general education activities and classes.
- Staff provide very well-differentiated materials, carefully tailored to meet each student's needs, with tasks broken down into small manageable steps.
- The school develops good partnerships with a wide range of outside organizations, which provide well-managed placements for students, enabling them to practice work-based skills.
- Staff have high expectations for each student, which are reflected in the inclusion program from pre-school to college.
- The school provides a calm, safe and supportive learning environment, and students say they enjoy their time in school.
- Staff share good practice and are eager to learn and keep abreast of new ideas and developments.
- Students are dignified by their learning and each can experience success.
- Staff have very positive relationships with students and provide interesting age-related and carefully planned instruction.
- The school provides a rich and varied curriculum using many different pathways to develop independence.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop a consistently rigorous approach to setting objectives, so that progress can be measured and meaningful comparisons made.
- Strengthen partnerships with parents by providing regular opportunities for parents from this school to meet as a group, so that they are further supported and involved in the students' education.
- Develop personal objectives for all teachers which are linked to the school's priorities as identified in the school Comprehensive Education Plan, and review these with the teacher on an annual basis.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

P226 Manhattan uses data very effectively to track the progress of each of its students, so that carefully tailored programs are developed for every individual. There is a common process for gathering data across the seven sites, which enables students to be fully supported when they move to the next stage in their schooling. The transitions phases are very carefully managed to minimize any disruption to students' learning. The principal leads a dedicated staff team with whom she has shared her vision for the school. The team works collaboratively pursuing a common goal of providing the best education for each student.

Parents and students say they can see the progress that has been made at the school. Carefully differentiated instruction ensures that each individual is challenged to learn new skills and develop their knowledge and understanding. All are able to experience success. The curriculum is carefully aligned to State standards, and thorough lesson planning incorporates the standards being addressed. Inclusion and work-based learning opportunities ensure that students' learning is extended. Communication goals and objectives for each student are devised and monitored by speech therapists, and these are displayed prominently in classrooms ensuring that they are incorporated in the instruction. Staff and students have good relationships which makes this a happy successful school, where there are clear guidelines and high expectations for all.

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 student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school has very effective systems for gathering a considerable amount of data on each student. A variety of assessment data including norm-referenced and standard-based tests provides valuable information for teachers and senior staff, so that each student's progress can be evaluated, comparisons between classes can be determined, and whole-school progress can be demonstrated.

The array of data is effectively collected and analyzed for each student so that the individual is viewed holistically. Progress towards individual goals, using each student's individualized education plan, is carefully monitored and reviewed very regularly over the year. This not only gives a current view of each student's performance, but also provides an indication as to the progress expected. These goals provide the focus for instruction. On-going assessment is effected by selecting bi-monthly pieces of work from each student for inclusion in the individual's portfolio. This work is annotated to show the current learning, the next step and the modification required to complete the task. Using this clear tracking process, teachers are able to identify the progress made by their students. Mid-term reviews are provided in report cards so that parents and students are aware of the progress that is being made.

The school analyzes the performance and progress made by the English language learners and the different ethnic groups so that carefully focused instruction can address the needs. One of the subgroups focused upon by the school is the higher achievers, as the school is determined to provide as many challenging opportunities as possible, as shown by the development of a university course for the older students. Comparisons are used effectively in a number of ways to evaluate progress. For example, school record cards show student performance over time, and both the Brigance assessment data and the New York State alternative assessments are analyzed rigorously in conjunction with the comparative graphs developed by the school to identify trends.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The whole school community is focused on raising even further the school’s achievement in developing each child in all areas, including academic growth, language acquisition, social skills, and independent living skills. The school’s high expectations fuel the quest to try out new ideas and develop new strategies. Teachers communicate their high expectations either verbally or through the use of the picture exchange communication system for those students who are not non verbal. Working together as a whole staff team is not always easy because of the geographical spread of the sites, but the team, which includes all teachers, coaches, paraprofessionals and other service providers, readily overcome this.

Collaboratively, the staff set goals and develop plans ensuring that a consistent approach to improvement is established. These jointly developed goals range from establishing each child’s next learning step, through setting classroom objectives to identifying whole-school goals focusing on short-, medium- and long-term growth. The school recognizes the importance of ensuring that these goals are objectively measurable, and it is endeavoring to fully integrate this into practice in order to ensure that all are readily quantifiable.

The school develops supportive and caring partnerships with parents. Parents are actively involved with the professionals in reviewing their children’s data in order to develop their individualized education plan. The needs of each student are carefully considered in setting the individual’s goals. Much support is put in place by the staff, the school-based coach and other related service providers in order to maximize learning opportunities for all students. Those in need of more support are provided with carefully tailored intervention.

Considerable support, greatly appreciated by the school, is also provided by parents and the wider community. In the lower grades, parents and staff communicate daily through a notebook, with phone calls and meetings as required. Parents are encouraged to try effective school strategies at home. As the student matures, the method and frequency of the contact changes according to the needs of all parties. Parents would welcome the opportunity to meet as a school group in order to share ideas to support their children even more effectively.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The curriculum, in accordance with objectives in the school Comprehensive Education Plan, is carefully aligned to meet the needs of the students, while providing good assessment tools. An array of data is collected and analyzed for each student so that a standards-based curriculum can be developed for each individual. For example, students in the elementary level use the computer to produce pieces of work which are age-appropriate, cognitively stimulating and aligned to the New York State standards. For students who are non-verbal, picture exchange communication is used, and photographs of the actual item, action and person are used prior to symbols being introduced.

Activities are broken down for each student into small measurable steps, providing a carefully focused rubric so that each student's progress is identifiable. This multi-step task analysis effectively incorporates students' goals as identified in their individualized education plans and in their communication plans.

Teachers are accountable for the performance of each student in their class, and are very competent at differentiating the work. The focus is the same, but the pathways are individualized, which fully engage the learners. Students say they enjoy coming to school and can see how much progress they are making. They indicate that they can always turn to someone if they need to. An arts project and a film-making activity provide much enrichment, and enable hidden talents to be uncovered. A recreational social vocational program provides further good opportunities for personal development.

Older students enjoy a variety of work placements, which are timetabled into their weekly schedules and allow them to extend their work-place learning skills. Rubrics developed for students working in a food supermarket contain both concrete and higher thinking skills, which challenge students but also allow small amounts of progress to be measured.

The school has developed good opportunities for students to be integrated into general education. In the high school, for example, an excellent partnership between the host and special schools has provided mutual benefit for all students, and some older general education students are involved in work experience in P226 Manhattan. PACE university is providing exciting openings for students from this school, and the students manage independently within a very supportive environment. Students are able to fulfill their potential, whether they are using language, or symbols in the picture exchange communication system, or pictures.

Resource allocation is complicated because of the number of school sites, but staffing is very carefully undertaken to ensure maximum impact. The team have a great depth of experience, knowledge and understanding, and evaluate fully new theories and practices. They are eager to keep abreast of recent developments and they allocate their resources wisely to promote new ideas and develop different strategies. Students are fully engaged in lessons, and their schedules are carefully managed to ensure that learning opportunities are maximized.

Student attendance is a high priority. There is a raft of well-established strategies to reduce the number of absences, including the use of the school's regular newsletter, drawing attention to the importance of promoting the good habit of regular attendance.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The principal has developed a strong staff team who are able to turn her vision into reality. They work hard gathering information which they use effectively to support their students' progress. Professional development is at the heart of the school. For example, staff reflect on differences in progress made students and use their conclusions to inform future practice. Staff actively share both their learning from professional development activities and their classroom good practice in order to promote learning for all. Teachers, working very closely with paraprofessionals, reflect on past performance and revisit plans to modify them in the light of new experiences. They value each other's positive contributions, and are a supportive stable team with much experience. They see their appointments as a long-term commitment.

The cabinet regularly conduct both informal and formal classroom observations, providing both verbal and written feedback to the staff. All observations are logged, and a template for formal observations focuses on instructional objectives and strategies, including a clear indication that all learning must be linked to the standards. Staff also observe each other's lessons in order to share knowledge and good practice. The principal recognizes that the development of a process in which staff set themselves objectives to be reviewed annually will promote further professional growth.

The school functions very well, and clear routines and procedures have been established which are consistently applied across the different sites. Students and staff are aware of the high standards expected of them. The principal is very well respected and provides strong leadership with significant capacity to drive the school forward.

The school has developed excellent local partnerships, which provide exciting opportunities for staff, parents and students. Business partnerships with large companies, including Xerox, Merrill Lynch and Staples, provide community based vocational instructional opportunities for students. University partnerships offer learning opportunities, such as conferences and courses for staff and parents, and school partnerships on the co-located sites offer inclusion opportunities which enable the students to pursue their learning in an age-appropriate environment.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school has been very successful in developing its use of data to promote learning. School plans are drawn up to enable progress to be determined, and evidence indicates that where a plan is not successfully delivering the required outcome it is re-focused, and where necessary, objectives are modified. For example, staff carefully refocused a plan designed to support the development of appropriate behavioral responses for an individual, since the original plan was seen not to be effective. New goals were set and new strategies were developed.

The school Comprehensive Education Plan contains clear goals, and although a small minority do not contain objectively measurable criteria, each goal is broken down into a checklist which includes diagnostic assessment of progress. Comparisons are used to establish good practice and determine which strategies are most beneficial for individuals. The school recognizes that when all goals can be measured, comparisons can be made more effectively, although this is not consistently the case.

The principal and her staff engage proactively in identifying areas for improvement in order to take effective action to address changing needs. Stability and consistency, which are very important in providing a safe learning environment for their students, are achieved through longer-term planning which demonstrates continuity and progression. The school's focus on unlocking the potential in each student guides decision-making and data is used very well to reassess planning and to develop new strategies to take the school even further.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: P226 M (PS 226)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

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 student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and 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 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X