



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Captain Vincent G Fowler School

Public School 108

**108-10 109 Avenue
Queens
NY 11420**

Principal: Marie Biondollilo

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Reviewer: Candido DeJesus

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Captain Vincent G Fowler School serves students from pre-kindergarten to the 5th grade. It is a large school with a diverse population that unites the entire school community in its effort to provide a quality standards-based education to its student population. Its 1307 students are 61% Asian and other ethnic groups, 29% Hispanic, 8% Black and 2% White. Special education pupils at this school make up 4% of the population and English language learners 6%. Students are mostly from Guyana in South America and islands such as Trinidad in the Caribbean. About 70% of the students are Title 1 eligible, higher than City schools and similar schools. Attendance at the school is 94%, higher than similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a visionary school leader who has improved the quality of instruction and organization at this school.
- Three talented assistant principals further enhance a cabinet that works collaboratively to provide sound instructional leadership.
- Interventions are effective and comprehensive in scope.
- The school has established systems for consistently gathering data, monitoring student progress and setting school improvement goals.
- Students at the school have demonstrated significant and sustained academic progress in all content area subjects.
- Teachers are competent, reflective of their practice and engage in child-centered instruction.
- Classrooms are print-rich and engaging learning environments.
- Professional development is comprehensive and well integrated with a strong emphasis on using data effectively.
- There are excellent strategies in place to encourage and reward good attendance.
- The school is clean, attractive and decorated with art and standards-setting student work.

What the school needs to improve

- Reduce class size and teacher to student ratio.
- Increase resources for interventions targeted for students recently arrived to the country with such issues as interrupted schooling.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The Vincent G Fowler School does an excellent job educating a large student population. In particular, the school has been receiving a large influx of children from the West Indies. The improvement demonstrated by students in all subject areas over the last few years demonstrates how the staff gathers and uses data in a consistent and systematic fashion. A strong principal, supported by a talented group of assistant principals, organize and administer the school in an exemplary manner. Effective planning occurs in teams, while high expectations are conveyed to all members of the school community. There is evidence of rigorous monitoring and evaluation of programs and improvement plans. Classrooms are pleasant and well resourced. Students are happy and actively engaged in their learning. Every student's progress is monitored carefully. Intervention services are exemplary and lack only funding.

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 consistently gathers formal and school generated data, by student, classroom and grade level, in a very efficient way. Documentation is collected in data binders that all teachers and administrators maintain. Teachers make excellent use of conferring notes, running records, reading logs and student work portfolios. The administration uses systematic protocols to hold teachers accountable for using data consistently to plan instruction and monitor the progress of students.

A large percentage of students are from Guyana. Many are in academic need as a result of interrupted schooling in their native countries. The school, however, has dealt with this issue in an effective manner by redirecting funds from other sources and still maintaining quality academic intervention services for those who need it. The school constantly updates its understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students. The impact of this effort is demonstrated by the sustained improvement in student performance not just in literacy and mathematics but in all subject areas and for all students of special interest to the school.

The staff is well developed at noticing patterns and trends over the school year. This is particularly important for developing support services and interventions for students recently arrived to the country. Variations in performance are carefully analyzed by teachers and supervisors at regular intervals. Such scrutiny often generates a change in programming or interventions. Teachers, administrators and support personnel hold frequent and constant conversations on how to improve student progress. Staff is adept at making comparisons of performance across classes, grades and groups of students. The school effectively monitors its own progress against that of other schools and with its own past performance.

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 staff is talented at managing systems and methods for setting demanding and measurable goals immediately and long range. School personnel can clearly justify why goals and plans are data driven and used precisely to enable accurate diagnosis of needs. Timeframes for achieving goals and targets are recorded with appropriate progress checkpoints. The cabinet effectively manages school wide improvement plans, while being assisted by support staff and teachers who manage the ongoing monitoring and analysis of student performance and progress.

The staff knows and can explain why individuals and groups of students have been identified for particular focus. The group of students, in greatest need of improvement, changes frequently based on data analysis. The school has implemented creative systems to meet the needs of all its students.

Parents and students are made to understand goals and benchmarks that students must meet and what they need to do to improve. Timeframes for achieving goals and benchmarks are recorded with appropriate checkpoints throughout the year for periodic assessment. The entire school community celebrates its achievement and successes while raising expectations for the next learning steps. All members of the school community are fully involved in the school’s improvement efforts and support each other.

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.

Teachers implement mandated curricula efficiently while modifying it with curriculum maps, pacing calendars and supplemented materials that make lessons at this school more engaging. The school chooses the best curriculum possible and adjusts it regularly to meet the specific needs of its target population of students. Teachers constantly plan different ways to differentiate instruction for their students based on what they analyzed from examining data periodically. Teachers rely heavily on examining student work and organizing it effectively into work portfolios. Student engagement is enhanced by frequent teacher conferencing with individual students and with guided reading lessons for small groups of students. Mathematics receives comprehensive support in the way of materials and extended day attention. Through additional mathematics support programs and increased technology as an example, the academic success of this school extends to all content area subjects.

In addition, teachers and administrators hold each other accountable for the progress of each student. The school is well developed at using agreed structures to identify responsibility. Decisions that concern budgets, staffing and scheduling are driven by the needs analyzed from data and school improvement plans. They clearly impact the achievement of students in the most positive manner. Student engagement is strong although class size has been growing in recent years. The school is adept at meeting the

challenges some of the students encounter as a result of interrupted schooling in their native country. Students are able to do independent work in kindergarten and self monitor their learning efforts. They are happy, enjoy their class work and demonstrate rigor in their learning. The school is also noteworthy for the positive relations between the adults and students. There are procedures and rewards for good attendance. Attendance is above the average for similar and City schools.

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 Captain Vincent G Fowler School has built a culture of teacher and administrator quality based on emulating best instructional practice and using data to assess needs and strategies. New staff members are selected on their potential to use data effectively to drive instruction and planning. Professional development is pro-active in its effort to address stated needs of the staff. Training activities are differentiated to address the skills needed to improve student outcomes. This well-integrated professional development assists teachers in their frequent reflection of their own practice and that of their colleagues. There are processes in place that allow regular opportunities for collaboration and planning amongst teachers in teams by grades, subject and specialties. The school uses good communication systems that keep all appropriate staff well informed of goals, plans and results of progress and achievement. The principal is well respected, hard working and the architect of the school's recent success. She and the assistant principals are constant participants in monitoring and improvement of instruction in every classroom. In addition, each supervisor takes responsibility for teaching a guided reading group of at-risk pupils with which they regularly meet. Procedures are clear, well communicated and contribute to the school running smoothly. Support services, youth development and interventions are all well organized around stated academic goals. The school also takes advantage of useful partnerships with outside bodies that routinely help academic achievement.

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 well developed processes for setting goals and benchmarks by using data to drive planning and instruction. They are well documented and systematically used to monitor progress and performance. Progress is monitored in objectively measurable ways using periodic assessments and by examining student work. The staff has a high capacity for using data to understand the strengths and areas of improvement that must make up the schools improvement plans. Procedures in place demonstrate rigorous monitoring and evaluation of progress towards meeting the set goals and benchmarks throughout the year. Programs, interventions, and goals are continuously modified, re-aligned and revised if the data shows a need to do so. As an example, support staff engaged in interventions are held accountable for regularly providing feedback to appropriate personnel in writing. Each successful phase is used to drive successive phases of goal setting with the understanding that full evaluation is an integral part of the school planning cycle. The entire school community is unified in its efforts to improve student outcomes and provide its students with a rewarding and engaging education.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Captain Vincent G Fowler School (PS 108)	∅	✓	+
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