



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Joseph R. Drake School

Public School 048

**1290 Spofford Avenue
Bronx
NY 10474**

Principal: John Hughes

Dates of review: November 1 - 3, 2006

Reviewer: David Tobin

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 48, in Hunt's Point, is a pre-kindergarten to grade 5 elementary school with 1076 students enrolled.

The student population is distributed across three buildings. Four pre-kindergarten classes are housed nearby in part of a former middle school. Eight classes are located in the Early Childhood Center, adjacent to the main building. The majority of students receive instruction in the main five-storey building, built in 1917.

In the last four years the number of students enrolled has been relatively constant, although a small but significant minority leaves or joins the school during the course of each academic year. This year, for the first time, a 5th grade was added and those students remained within the elementary school.

The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding. Approximately 70% of the student population is Hispanic, nearly 30% are Black and about 1% White, Asian and Other. Annual student attendance over the last four years ranges from 89% to 91% which is marginally below similar schools and all City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's clear vision and proven management skills have been instrumental in creating a supportive learning environment for all students and staff.
- Collaborative management at grade and faculty levels has contributed significantly to the school's sustained progress over the last four years.
- The guidance and support available to students with a diverse range of needs has created a climate of mutual respect.
- The strong focus on enhanced patterns of school attendance and appropriate classroom management has resulted in much increased school attendance and positive pupil attitudes to school.
- The high priority given to the professional development of all staff is having a positive impact on students' learning in literacy, math and other curriculum areas.
- Teamwork throughout the school draws regularly on data derived from a range of sources including the data generated by the school to determine how and when issues of assessment and evaluation are to be considered.
- Systems for tracking students' progress are extensive and are maintained throughout the school year.
- Special education students have challenging but realistic goals and are given extra support to meet the grade levels required.
- The quality of teaching is kept under constant review and examples of good practice are shared and discussed.
- The well established practice of collaboration with external consultants ensures that staff are open and responsive to change and innovation.

Areas for Improvement

- Give staff, working at grade and faculty levels, the task of devising a set of strategies that will deliver the school's goals and objectives for 2006-07.
- Encourage staff to link a lesson's teaching objectives more closely with a lesson's prescribed learning outcomes.
- Find ways of involving parents in the day to day life of the school and in gaining an understanding of the school's achievements.
- Increase the focus on the progress and achievements of the new 5th grade notably with regard to their engagement in the classroom and their participation as members of a group.
- Devise a strategy for improving the special education performance of the 4th grade English language arts students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The principal has transformed Joseph R. Drake Elementary school since his appointment six years ago. Staff enjoy working in the school; students develop their self confidence and self worth and are successful in their learning and teachers are committed not only to the welfare of the students but also to their continuing professional development. The principal provides sensitive, purposeful and dynamic leadership. He delegates very effectively thereby ensuring that the talents of his teaching colleagues are used effectively. In doing so he has earned his colleagues' full support.

The cabinet's determination to pursue year-on-year improvement in student's progress is matched by their commitment to encourage individual students to be hard-working, free-thinking decision-makers who are able to reason, learn and communicate. That has meant that careful use has been made of both internal qualitative and external quantitative data in order to devise individual intervention plans that seek to increase students' self-worth as well as improving their progress.

The school has already identified the need to drive up the levels achieved by its most needy students and to increase the level of parental involvement. Strategies now need to be devised to secure these goals.

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 principal and school and faculty leaders thoroughly scrutinize the school's State and City test results. All staff are fully aware that, with the exception of special education students, the State and City test results reveal that the school's students performing at levels 3 and 4 out perform students in similar schools and all City schools.

The school uses a range of data to track the achievements of groups of students and individuals. As a result of routine reviews, last year's performance of grade 4 special education students was pinpointed as an area in need of improvement. Accordingly, the school's *Goals and Objectives 2006-2007*, now identifies how these students will be supported in making further progress and how the different learning communities might offer assistance. Teaching staff make effective use of the school's own data in order to drive up student achievement further. Thus, practice examination results for grade 4 and 5 were circulated to all teachers with the intention of helping teachers understand where student progress was evident and highlighting where class performance remains stubbornly resistant to change. Teachers make good use of this to review individual and group performance at grade and subject meetings.

The school's 'student centered' approach ensures that teachers use formative and summative assessment in differentiating instruction and to provide a detailed knowledge of students' progress. Staff acknowledge that their sensitivity is heightened to a wide range of issues affecting student's cognitive and affective development.

The school benchmarks its performance against similar schools to enable it to monitor student progress over time. Disaggregated data for students with individual education plans, for instance, has been collected over a five-year period for English language arts and mathematics at grades 3 and 4. This confirms the school's view of steady improvements year on year and markedly superior improvements when compared with District 8 data.

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

Under the principal's leadership, management responsibilities have been delegated to senior staff and all are confident in communicating the school's vision and values to colleagues, students and parents. Assistant principals, grade and faculty leaders work effectively alongside colleagues in understanding and planning for students' learning.

Collaborative planning at grade and faculty levels has contributed significantly to the school's sustained progress. Teams throughout the school draw regularly on data derived from a range of sources resulting in data analysis that influences goal-setting and instruction. This initiative has contributed to the steady, sustained improvements in student progress over the last four years for students in grades 3, 4 and 5.

The principal's *Goals and Objectives 2006-2007* identifies improvements in student performance and sets new and challenging targets. In effect, this is a blueprint for continued improvement. However, staff working at grade and faculty levels, could play a greater part in determining those strategies that will deliver these improvements. Systems for tracking students' progress are extensive and are maintained throughout the school year. The scrutiny of students' portfolios of work at grade and faculty levels lies at the heart of planning for improving instruction and student performance.

A very high priority is given to the significant minority of special education students. An assistant principal now has the overall responsibility for ensuring that these students are given challenging but realistic goals and receive targeted extra support. Once again, however, a strategy now needs to be articulated that sets out precisely how improvements in the performance of the 4th grade special education students are to be achieved. The issues that arise include questioning techniques that probe students' understanding; teachers' arrangements for giving feedback; sharing learning goals with students; and peer and self assessment.

Despite the fact that the school communicates effectively with parents some remain confused about how well the school performs. Ways of involving parents in the day to day life of the school need to be developed further if parents are to gain an understanding of the school's achievements.

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 school offers its students a balanced curriculum with a strong emphasis on English language arts and mathematics. In addition, good opportunities are provided for science, social studies, health and physical education, technology, and the arts. As instruction aims to capture the students' interest and imagination, a variety of instruction methods are employed in an effort to sustain students' interest levels. These include teacher exposition, demonstration, questioning whole class, small group and individual work. The students respond well and are enthusiastic learners.

Teachers' lesson planning usually makes few references to specific learning objectives and on occasion opportunities are lost during lessons to provide students with feedback and share examples of pupils' good practices. For example, when students make use of powerful language ('juicy words'), such examples need to be shared with the whole class to illustrate how they might demonstrate progress.

Impressive efforts are made at grade and faculty levels to achieve consistency in the quality of instruction across the school. The principal carries out an annual lesson observation for each teacher and provides feedback of a high caliber. A 'learning walk' has been introduced in which all teachers, support staff and students participate in visits to classrooms to observe teaching and learning. Subsequent discussions lead to the production and dissemination of a short report to all staff. This includes, for example, reference to rubrics in the classroom, students' understanding of a teachers' expectations and differentiation of work according to ability. Grade and faculty meetings place a strong emphasis on teams of teachers examining the evidence of student progress and performance from a range of sources and data bases. Overall, this is a strength of the school.

Although attendance stands at 90% thereby falling marginally below that achieved by similar schools and all City schools, strenuous efforts are made to monitor and report attendance figures on a daily basis with incentives being offered to classes who achieve 100 per cent attendance rates. The school maintains a strong focus on enhancing students' school attendance patterns.

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

Teachers express unqualified confidence in the leadership of the school and accordingly, staff turnover is low. The principal's rapport with his colleagues, students, and parents is excellent. His energy, enthusiasm and clear vision of how to move the school forward, have been critical factors in the school's development.

Experience reveals that some outstanding teachers have been hired who have the capacity to embrace the school's climate of openness and mutual support. This, in part, is attributable to the careful vetting of all applications for teaching positions by the principal and, while hires are based on qualifications and experience, deliberate account is taken of how well a candidate relates to staff and students during the school visit.

The high priority given to the professional development of all staff has a positive impact on students' learning in literacy, math and other curriculum areas. A series of professional development opportunities; some of which are led by external consultants and others via in-house support and training, have been carefully planned to build a team of reflective practitioners. For example, a professional development in literacy and numeracy initiative brought in an external consultant to discuss leadership styles and the school's vision and values, while the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Learning introduced *The Learning Walk* an approach for identifying the learning opportunities available in classrooms. Team teaching, inter-visitations and one-to-one peer assistance are used extensively as methods of developing staff expertise and building capacity of all teachers, whether new, struggling or experienced.

The school runs smoothly and efficiently. Routines are well established and are known and understood by staff and students. On those rare occasions when a flashpoint occurs and a student loses self control, staff are skilled in defusing such situations. Extra curricular activities include Sport and Arts in School Foundation and Saturday school to help prepare students for the school's testing program. Overall, the climate of mutual respect promotes the self confidence and self belief of pupils with a diverse range of needs.

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 is committed to continued improvement and has streamlined its arrangements for monitoring students' progress and evaluating improvement plans and teaching practices. Reflection and review are an integral part of the school's culture.

The school's Comprehensive Education Plan has been translated into a sharper, more incisive executive summary that identifies the need to accelerate the performance of 4th grade English language arts special education students, the implementation of a unified delivery of instruction in literacy and mathematics and further improvement in the basic literacy skills of English language learners. The summary also specifies curriculum targets and identifies the resource implications for developing areas of the curriculum further.

Teaching and learning are kept under constant review by both teachers and senior staff. Student's progress is a priority agenda item at grade and faculty meetings where examples of good practice are shared and discussed. Conscious of the need for students to improve their grades from year to year, Saturday Test Prep-o-mania sessions have been introduced but their impact has yet to be evaluated. Push-in, pull-out sessions are provided for students whose progress showed signs of dipping. *The Learning Walk* has been introduced so that the learning opportunities available in classrooms are identified

and utilized. Also, data is being gathered providing evidence that special education interventions at kindergarten reduce the need for such interventions at a later stage

There is a well established practice of collaboration with external consultants that results in staff being open and responsive to change and innovation. In these sessions topics such as *Assessment* and *Record-keeping* feature strongly alongside leadership and management issues. However, little attention has yet been given to the progress and achievements of grade 5 students particularly with regard to their engagement in the classroom and their participation as members of a group.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

| | | | |
|--|---|---|----------|
| SCHOOL NAME: Joseph R Drake (PS 48) | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 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 |