



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Park Place Community Middle School

Middle School 266

**62 Park Place
Brooklyn
NY 11217**

Principal: Michele Robinson

Dates of review: March 27 - 28, 2008

Lead Reviewer: David Wynford Jones

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Park Place is a middle school with 217 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 63% Black, 32% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and there are no special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school operates on one of four floors and shares the building with a District 75 school. The space available to Park Place Community Middle School is limited.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is increasingly using data to promote higher attainment and has a good understanding of the school's development needs.
- The principal receives good support from members of the school cabinet who assist in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, which is leading to whole school improvement.
- There is a shared and high expectation that students will exceed the age-related rate of progress.
- The school has a well-organized approach to the monitoring of instruction to provide support for teachers who are experiencing difficulties.
- The school is establishing good cross-curricular links in math and science to consolidate students' knowledge, skills and understanding and to support their learning in other subjects.
- Students behave well and show respect for each other and adults throughout the school community.
- The school presents as a positive, caring and learning culture where students feel confident they can grow and achieve their best.
- Very effective monitoring procedures ensure attendance is above average.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure all teachers differentiate activities so that all students, particularly the higher achievers, make good progress.
- Refine ways in which data is collated and analyzed to give a better understanding of the progress of both ethnic and gender groups.
- Based on the group analysis, provide additional support to those students who are in the greatest need of improvement.
- Provide more opportunities for students to take part in a wider and more varied curriculum, both inside and outside the school day.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school is a well-managed community that provides an environment in which students can learn. Parents and students are supportive of the school and value the emphasis placed on trust and respect in the school community. As a result, students behave well, show respect for all members of the school community, and feel secure in the school. They enjoy school and have high attendance rates.

The principal has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has a clear view of how to improve instruction to raise students' achievement. She shares her expectations that students will make more than the age-related progress with staff, students and parents. The administration leads and manages the school competently. They place suitable emphasis on providing continuous professional development to improve teacher instruction and student progress. Staff are committed to improving the learning opportunities and achievement of all students by working collaboratively. Teachers welcome discussions on data and the feedback from lesson observations. As a result, cross-curricular initiatives such as those in science and math are developing well and are consolidating students' understanding.

The administrative team has begun to use assessment data more effectively to track individual students' progress, to set goals and to hold teachers to account. However, the school does not analyze assessment information sufficiently rigorously to check the progress of different ethnic and gender groups and ensure that no group falls behind. The collection of student progress data, its analysis and use in planning is developing at too slow a pace. Teachers still do not use this information sufficiently to plan differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students. Consequently, some students, particularly the higher achievers do not make sufficient progress and their achievement is not high enough.

The work of the inquiry team is established. They have identified students not making age-rated progress and implemented intervention strategies. The team monitors students closely and modifies the strategies if the students are not progressing. This is having a positive impact on their rate of progress.

Issues raised in the previous Quality Review, with the exception of creating more space for a library and a dedicated science area, have been addressed with varying degrees of success. The principal has undertaken some negotiation for additional space but this has not been forthcoming. The lack of space restricts the development of the school and the curriculum programs for art, drama, music and dance.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school uses an increasing range of tests and assessments to monitor the progress of individual students. There is now regular monitoring of progress in English and math. This enables the principal to analyze the progress of individual students and for teachers to have a clearer understanding of each student's level of achievement. The school uses this information to identify, track and provide additional support for students who find learning difficult. However, it does not use it sufficiently well to analyze the progress of all students, particularly the higher achievers, or to check for differences in performance between boys and girls and different ethnic groups. The school does monitor the progress of the few students who are English language learners effectively and provides support to ensure they make the expected rate of progress. The administration is working hard to provide teachers with professional development to enhance their understanding of the use of data to track progress and to inform their planning. Some use the data to plan lessons in order to promote the progress of individual students well but this is not consistent across the school. As a result, in too many lessons teachers do not differentiate instruction to meet the full range of ability. The principal uses the data well to compare the achievement of the students with other local schools. She is determined Park Place School will remain one of the higher achieving middle schools and that students, through the use of data to inform planning, will make good progress.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school gives students guidance and help to improve, and records and assesses their progress more consistently. Staff members regularly discuss students' progress at grade conferences and base decisions on interventions firmly on assessment data. Teachers are aware of the expectations that students will exceed the expected rate of progress. This collaborative approach in setting goals is increasingly ensuring that individual students make progress and that staff can target interventions for those who find learning difficult and for English language learners. However, in contrast, the expectations of higher achieving students are not high enough and this limits the progress they make. In addition, because the school does not analyze its data with sufficient rigor, there are potentially groups of students who are underachieving.

The administration values parental support. Parents say that the school makes them feel welcome and keeps them well informed about their children's goals and the progress they make. The school provides ongoing feedback through a variety of means, including report cards and one-to-one conferences with teachers. It contacts parents at an early stage if problems arise. Students say they understand what their teachers

expect of them. They are very positive about the school and the efforts it makes to ensure their success.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school implements the mandated curriculum and underpins it by a regular pattern of testing. It is increasingly using data to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the students. Subject teams are developing good cross-curricular links, particularly in math and science. There is increasing evidence of the consolidation of basic reading and writing skills through other subjects. This is having a positive impact on performance. The use of information technology to support instruction and student learning is inconsistent and has not had a significant impact on students’ progress. Students can take part in out-of-school activities, including clubs such as chess, physical fitness and basketball. The school provides after school opportunities for students who find learning difficult for additional instruction in English language arts and math enabling them to make the expected rate of progress. However, parents, students and teachers agree there are insufficient opportunities both within and outside the school day to take part in activities such as dance, drama, and music.

There are still some inconsistencies between teachers in the use of their assessments and test scores to plan for differentiated instruction. While there is some good practice, the administration does not capitalize enough on this to promote good instructional skills throughout the school. Administration carries out a regular program of class observations together with supportive and developmental feedback to ensure teachers know what is expected. Teachers are aware that they are accountable for the quality of their instruction and the progress their students made. The school is a purposeful community in which students and adults feel safe and well supported. The atmosphere of trust and respect extends to all areas of school life and results in a positive learning culture that promotes students’ confidence and encourages them to try their best.

The school manages its budget proficiently. It has recruited an assistant principal and a literacy coach to enhance the administrative team and to support development plans directly associated with improving students learning. The school has well-established systems for monitoring attendance and follows up unexplained student absence immediately. Parents and students understand this and it is contributing to sustaining high attendance rates.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The administration work together to carry out a regular program of class observations, providing supportive feedback that helps teachers to improve their practice and develop their skills. This has a direct influence on the quality of instruction and the progress the

students make. There is a clear focus on professional development for all staff closely aligned to the needs of students and the school's goals. The induction and support program for newly appointed staff works well. Mentors help enable them to improve their skills and to grow professionally. The principal takes an interest in their progress and development. Teachers have increasing opportunities to discuss professional issues with each other and they meet regularly to plan together in teams. Focused and well-run grade level meetings have outcomes that have a direct bearing on the school's development priorities. Teachers and other professionals value these opportunities to enhance students' learning.

The administration ensures that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Parents and students value highly the safe and secure environment that the school provides. Teachers know their students well. They provide a good level of pastoral care and relationships are good. As a result, students agree, they like their school. Several commented, "We like our teachers. We feel safe in school. We can go to anyone if we need help." Students confirm that the school is an orderly place and relationships are good. Several students referred to the school as "a big family". Links with the New York University are developing well and support the students' development and understanding in math and science. The school successfully introduced a retreat for grade 6 students and plans to extend it to other grades over the coming year. This is making a good contribution to the students' social and academic skills.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The administration is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the detailed analysis of the students' progress and the setting of interim and final goals. Consequently, the school has established half-yearly conferences for the students to discuss their progress in English language art and math. The school is increasingly using these sessions to set interim goals and to check on progress. The administration monitors the data and uses it to inform future planning and curriculum developments. When necessary it adopts different intervention strategies for those students who find learning difficult. As a result, these students continue to make progress. However, the school does not identify higher achieving students with the same degree of rigor. It does not challenge these students sufficiently in their learning and consequently they do not make enough progress.

The principal has established a clear direction for the school. She receives good supported from members of the cabinet in monitoring and evaluating its work. The school bases its vision on the expectation that students will make more than the expected rate of progress during the year. In order to achieve this ambitious vision, the principal and members of the cabinet are well aware that the lack of differentiation within lessons is a key area for development if the students are to make good progress. Grade conferences provide effective opportunities for analyzing data and drawing from it strategies to modify teaching. Teachers appreciate the support and direction that emanates from these meetings and in the confirmation of the identification of students who require additional support.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Park Place Community Middle School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			X		

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?			X		
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?			*		
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?		X			
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			X		
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X		

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?		X			
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?			X		
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X		

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?		X			
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?			X		
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?		X			
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?			X		
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?			X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?			X		
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?			X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?			X		
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X		

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X		

* Not scored due to the absence of the population

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped