



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Mary WhiteOvington Middle School

Intermediate School 030

**415 Ovington Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11209**

Principal: Danielle Maringo

Dates of review: January 8 – 9, 2007

Reviewer: Veronica Young

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Part 1: The school context

Mary Ovington is a junior high school which opened in 1997. It is a multi-ethnic neighborhood school which is housed in a converted apartment building over four floors. There are few facilities other than classrooms in the building.

There are currently 339 students in the school, which takes students from grade 6 through 8. Of these, 0.29% are American Indian or Alaskan, 15.72% are Asian, 20.77% are Hispanic, 1.48% are Black and 61.72% are White, a substantial number of whom are Arabic speakers. The proportion of special education students is 3.39% and almost 8% are English language learners. Both proportions are below those of similar and City schools. The school attendance rate, at almost 95%, is higher than the City average. The school is not eligible for Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is highly respected and has good capacity to affect change.
- There is a good range of appropriate professional development opportunities, which is largely driven by the needs revealed by the student data.
- The school runs smoothly, with excellent leadership by the principal and assistant principal and a high level of communication throughout the school.
- Student attendance is a high priority for the school and any absence immediately triggers the school's effective intervention strategies.
- Particular attention is given to those students in greatest need of improvement, and good intervention is put into place rapidly and regularly monitored for effectiveness.
- Students are well-behaved and polite, showing enjoyment of and enthusiasm for learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Plan instruction to meet the needs of all students as shown by data, including ethnic groups.
- Make sure the evaluations of differentiation strategies are consistently carried out.
- Ensure scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are informed by the needs emerging from the student data, such as the grouping of students in class.
- When analyzing statistics and plans, include the impact made by ethnicity and gender differences.
- Ensure goals and plans focus on specific groups of students as well as those for whole school, grade, subjects, and individual students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal has been in place for only five months, but in that time, has established the importance of collecting, analyzing and interpreting data to inform curriculum, teaching and goal setting for classes and some individual students. The introduction of after school programs and enrichment for all superintendent's classes has raised achievement across the school. Staff are getting used to this initiative, and are very positive, especially about the impact and the new teaching methods that have consequently been introduced. Monitoring and assessment is presently in place only for class groups and individual students. They are not yet broken down for smaller groups including ethnic and gender groups, largely because systems are new and not established fully in the school's practice.

The small size of the school is advantageous in that all staff and students know each other by name, helping to develop strong relationships and trust. However, the lack of physical space means enrichment of the curriculum in the school building is limited. The school compensates by organizing effective partnerships with community groups that enrich curriculum opportunities for students.

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 proficient with some undeveloped features

English language arts teaching and learning have improved in the school because of a greater focus on collecting data about different aspects and components of the subject. As a result, the school has a secure understanding of students' reading ability and fluency, and their comprehension skills. This information is used well to plan programs, for classes and some individual students, and helps instructional staff and coaches to design appropriate informative assessments. Teachers are now starting to group children according to their individual scores in each category. In addition, some cross-curricular initiatives, such as developing reading skills in social studies classes and the introduction of study skills courses, are raising levels further. Tests for mathematics are currently being developed. A consultant with particular expertise on data collection and its use meets weekly with the mathematics coach and teachers to break down data and create strategies for improving students' performance.

The school uses data well to compare the performance and progress of English language learners, special education students and those students in danger of not reaching grade standards. Its understanding of how well students in other groupings are performing, including ethnic and gender groups, is not secure because systems are not currently in place. The school is developing systems to compare its performance with other schools and how well students are making progress in each subject, grade and class.

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 proficient.

The current principal has introduced short, medium, and long-term goals and subsequent action plans to drive the school’s work. The emphasis is on the process of how to achieve the goals as well as on the outcome. This has encouraged the link between teaching and learning and a greater emphasis on the facilitation of learning when planning instruction. Goals are currently only set for class groups and those students who have not reached grade standards, but it is planned to introduce goal setting for other groupings during this year. Goals concentrate on the skills to be developed in each individual program. For example, as a result of data analysis which identified note taking and prioritization as weaker aspects, a study skills program is planned for introduction to every grade next year. Goals and action planning are now beginning to drive the activity of all staff.

Profiles are completed on each student every September, using information from the Princeton Review, which identifies interim goals in English language arts and mathematics for some students. Those students thought to be at risk of lower achievement are identified for closer tracking and suitable intervention. The assistant principal heads a committee to look at strategies for high achievers identified from the data. This has resulted in a change to the mathematics curriculum and appropriate enrichment activities being formulated. The format of portfolios is based on the State standards. Staff conference regularly with students to identify skills requiring development and to plan how individual needs can be met. Rubrics for achievement are now visible in all classrooms so school and teacher expectations are constantly being reinforced.

The intervention team at the school, consisting of the academic intervention specialist, administrators, student counselor, coaches, targeted teachers, and occasionally the psychologist, meets fortnightly to monitor the progress of all students achieving at level 1 and 2 and any at risk of falling back. Consequently, appropriate intervention strategies are put into place and regularly reviewed. Interim goals are adjusted as necessary.

All staff have high expectations of students and these are regularly reinforced to students and to parents and caregivers. The school encourages regular dialogue between parents and caregivers. It has devised English language arts backpacks for each grade consisting of books, games, articles and practice tests for students to take home and work through with parents. This informs the parents about student’s work at school and encourages their children’s independent work. This has been going for only a short time, but students are very enthusiastic about the scheme. Intervention kits are being bought for parents to use with their children at home and there are plans to train parents in their use.

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 proficient.

The school’s curriculum is based on the needs and achievements of its students. Much of it is mandatory, but the principal works with instructional teams to adapt and link learning across subjects where possible. For example, as a result of the information from data

analysis, literacy is now being embedded into social studies. Instructional staff, assisted by coaches, make sure the curriculum is based on State and City standards to ensure students have the necessary skills for achievement in the standardized tests. Teachers do not yet use data so effectively to adjust programs and set goals for all students so they can improve differentiated instruction.

Budgeting and staffing decisions are based on the outcomes of data analysis. The principal budgets according to student need identified in internal and external data, in areas such as professional development, teaching and learning resources and staff utilization. Money has been invested in enrichment for superintendents' classes and additional support in the after school and Saturday classes. These programs are closely monitored to inform plans for expansion next year. The take-up and attendance at these programs are good. As yet data is not used sufficiently well to group students in class according to their needs.

Attendance is a high priority. If a student is absent, the school immediately contacts home. Non-attendance is usually because of religious holidays or severe health problems.

Students enjoy school and are enthusiastic about their learning. In classes, students are well-behaved and considerate. Students are encouraged to work collaboratively in technology and this engages their interests. Classes for English language learners are taught in teams, so students can be supported on a more individual basis, according to specific need. Classes are well-planned and taught to realistic objectives. Staff monitor which students ask for the most help, enabling the school to keep a close eye on those who do not and give guidance on how these students can ask for help more regularly. Through the peer mediation program, students are trained on how to lead discussions and resolve conflicts. Most students feel able to ask for advice about personal concerns.

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 proficient with some well developed features

The principal works hard to inculcate all staff with a shared vision of greater individualization and a greater emphasis on skill development. Teachers are selected according to strict criteria based on knowledge of content, on teaching and classroom management skills and good lesson design and delivery. High expectations of students are expected, as is experience in or a willingness to learn how to use of data to differentiate instruction.

The school's improvement needs as identified by the data, inform professional development decisions. This year, data management, teaching to objectives, curriculum progression and the use of technology across the school and subjects have been prioritized. The greatest emphasis has been on collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to drive instruction, as some staff in the school are inexperienced in its use.

The principal and assistant principal observe several classes each day on a formal or informal basis, with timely feedback to teachers. Formal observations follow a strict set of criteria and are carried out 4 to 6 times per year for new teachers and twice per year for all others. A culture of peer support is being established, to share good practice and ensure consistency in standards.

The principal is highly respected by the staff, students and parents. She has put many successful changes into place, including the consistent use of data and the introduction of goals to accelerate progress. Staff have embraced the need for change, and have a shared vision and are accountable for their work. They meet in teams regularly and make open and honest reviews of the effectiveness of their teaching methods. This leads to clear revisions to plans and practice as required. Clear communication and secure systems ensure the school runs smoothly.

Support services at the school include a school psychologist and a very active student counselor who assist student intervention. Partnerships with outside agencies, such as the Kiwanis Club, local churches and the New York City Roadrunners give good opportunities for students to work in the community. These experiences raise self-confidence and team work, and help students to achieve academic and personal goals.

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 proficient

The school's shared vision is demonstrated through its Comprehensive Education Plan. It is written by the school leadership team, under the supervision of the principal and with additional input from the assistant principal, coaches, teachers, and parents. It is a living document, which is available for anyone to read. It emphasizes the importance of goal setting as informed by data and incorporates speedy intervention and details the resources required to improve student achievement. Trends in achievement are used to create action plans to address student needs at class and individual levels, but the school is still developing methods to extend this practice to relevant groups.

A student with targeted intervention is formally reviewed every eight weeks. English language arts and mathematics departments formally monitor students' progress four times per year and skills evaluation is ongoing. These cycles ensure interventions are timely and the appropriacy of individual targets can be maintained. Any students not reaching grade level standards has immediate intervention, as do those students who are at risk of dropping from level 4 to 3. Systems are very effective, with improvements noted in reading comprehension, fluency and speed, and improved skills in mathematics.

Student progress and work are discussed in regular department meetings to evaluate progress and make adjustments to programs. This facilitates the school's recently introduced systems to make comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms to inform learning programs.

Monitoring of improvement plans takes place in instructional team meeting, union consultative meetings, and meetings with individual staff who are part of planning and programming procedures. The school has emphasized the importance of understanding what is being tested in assessments and how this is translated into data. After school intervention classes are grouped in areas of need, making targeted improvement easier. The effective of new systems are reflected in higher achievement this year.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Mary White Ovington Middle School (IS 30)	∅	✓	+
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	