



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**The Magnet School for Leadership in the 21st
Century**

**Public School 172
825 Fourth Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11232**

Principal: Jack Spatola

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Reviewer: George Wallace

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Magnet School for Leadership in the 21st Century is an elementary Empowerment School for students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. There are currently 550 students. The school has a predominance of Hispanic students, comprising 80% of the population, with 15% White, 3% Black and 2% from other groups.

The proportion of special education students is 17%, taught mainly in general classes across the school. The proportion of English language learners continues to grow and now represents 33% of the school population.

The school receives Title I funding with nearly 90% of students eligible. This is a little lower than similar schools but much higher than the City average. Attendance over recent years is above the average for similar and citywide schools and last year was 93.8%. The school has seen a stable administration and teaching staff for many years.

As an empowerment school, the Magnet School for Leadership in the 21st Century has more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment Schools are free to develop or purchase professional development service, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork. This school is also currently engaged in a research project to design its own Periodic Assessment materials. The first such assessments are already in use.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Planning and teaching are good and sometimes excellent, ensuring that children engage with their learning, enjoy their school, and achieve high standards.
- The school provides extremely well for all students, and particularly for those who are English language learners or special education students.
- The school has created a high quality environment for learning, where staff feel part of a strong supportive community that has an extremely clear mission for continuous improvement.
- Collaboration and teamwork are very strong ensuring that monitoring and evaluation at all levels is successful.
- The principal is extremely well respected and his vision drives the school towards ever-higher standards through a relevant and enjoyable curriculum.
- The school generates and uses a wide variety of data to very good effect allowing for changes and refinements to planning at class, grade and school level.
- Expectations are high and shared, which helps ensure that the school provides extremely well for students' academic, social and personal well-being.
- Professional development is a strong feature of school improvement and increasing teacher expertise.
- Students experience a broad curriculum taught in classrooms that provide a rich environment for learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Determine the reasons for the mismatches between teachers' assessments and the interim and final test results.
- Make interim summative reports more explicit about the rate of students' individual progress.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

This is a well-developed school with several outstanding features. The school has a clear vision shared by all staff. The students' high levels of achievements over recent years, reflects the school's very strong commitment to continuous improvement. Standards are very high and in both English language arts and mathematics, is twice the average for similar schools and well above the average for all City averages.

The school collects a wide range of data and uses it effectively to test whether it is on track to reach its goals. Systems are securely in place for teachers to record assessment outcomes. These are used extremely well to keep check on the progress of students. Careful evaluation of these assessments ensures that, where justified, the school makes immediate changes to plans and programs of study. Together with discussions at grade and classroom level, evaluations are used to good effect to bring about changes to aspects of staff professional development. There are two small areas for development. The school does not have an in-depth understanding of the correlation between teacher assessments and examination outcomes. It has not considered additional ways to measure students' progress.

The teachers' planning is good quality and in many cases, excellent. The school has created an excellent learning environment. As a result, students are engaged, their learning is effective and they very much enjoy their school.

The principal is very well respected by staff and the parent community. Expectations are high for all work undertaken in the school. Development opportunities for teachers are excellent, both within the school and beyond. Lessons are observed and good quality feedback given. The school runs extremely smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

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 generates and makes effective use of a wide range of assessment data to aid curriculum development and meet students' individual needs. In particular, periodic 'end of unit' tests and the Empowerment School Network's 'Do Your Own' tests provide regular checks. Alongside these, go frequent, diagnostic teacher assessments. Senior leaders and teachers are very good at handling data and using additional statistical information.

The school makes particularly good use of its data to analyze carefully and regularly the progress made by various groups of students. The high standards reached and success felt by English language learners and special education students derive from the meticulous attention paid to these each student at class, grade and whole school levels. Equally thorough is the analysis of data by gender. Outcomes are considered at cabinet, grade or parents' meetings and have already led to some resource changes. The staff and

the principal in particular, probe rigorously the interpretation of the data at these meetings. This thorough questioning lifts the level of discussion so that the conclusions, and especially points for action, are extremely clear. Therefore, staff know what has been successful and what modifications to curriculum plans are necessary. These changes help ensure that the course content is differentiated to give the right level of challenge for the students at each grade.

Some findings from data analysis are scheduled for re-examination at the same time as the wider whole-school evaluation. The school recognizes two areas for continued improvement. These are in correlating teachers' assessments more closely with the periodic formal assessments and for teachers to be more precise about their expectations of each student's progress.

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, 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 principal has a very clear vision for the school that staff and parents share and support strongly. There is substantial involvement of staff in school development and a broad range of activities for parents, including supported reading sessions for children. These workshops help parents learn more about the work of the teachers and contribute to the success of their children. This level of collaboration is indicative of the extensive teamwork that exists throughout the school. It contributes substantially to the well-developed process for setting demanding, measurable goals for both immediate and long-range improvement.

Cabinet meetings focus on the 'big picture' of school performance and development needs. However, grade meetings are also a major driving force for change and improvement. At grade meetings the results of Cabinet decisions are shared, ideas considered and the processes and resources used in teaching are evaluated. The frequent outcome of grade meetings is that plans are modified and new resources or strategies agreed.

The quality of the assessment data enables teachers to gauge accurately the quality of students' learning. If additional help is required for students, there are clear useful procedures to confirm the original assessment and provide intervention support. There is very good provision for special education students and English language learners in general classrooms and in the collaborative team teaching classes. They make good progress and achieve well. An extensive and effective after school program and Saturday school provides additional support for students.

All staff have high expectations for their students. Parents are kept very well informed of school activities, its curriculum and assessments. This high level of expectation is well - known, understood and accepted by parents, and they and their children respond superbly. Parents serve as mentors in classrooms and support the students' learning. Parents are also heavily involved in the partnership of home learning and receive guidance on how to provide help to their children.

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 provides extremely well for students’ academic and social development and personal well-being. The curriculum is rich and diverse. As well as the mandated curriculum, there is an arts program for all students, many school trips and a wide range of valued and well-attended after-school activities.

Teachers know that they are accountable for improving instruction and this has long been a feature of the school. Teachers know from the time they are interviewed for a job at the school until they leave, that understanding how children learn and what needs to be done to remove any barriers to learning are central to their work. Teaching is generally of a high quality. Planning is thorough and the teachers let students know exactly the purpose of each lesson. This further confirms the teachers’ secure understanding of how students learn.

The school makes staffing and scheduling decisions based very largely on the analysis of students’ needs. For example, the schedule is changed during the year for early morning independent reading, in response to changing needs. The school uses its budget appropriately as for example, in funding increases in intervention support when required. The intervention program is well developed and highly effective. Lessons are often fun. The students enjoy school and concentrate hard on work that is challenging and enjoyable. Teachers are very supportive and students know they will get tasks that will make them think. Students feel safe and secure and know whom they can turn to for help.

Attendance is above the average for both similar schools and New York City. Systems to monitor attendance and check absence are effective. Parents respond well to these systems.

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.

Staff selection procedures are rigorous and fair. The school ensures that prospective teachers subscribe to the vision and work ethic of the school. The teachers are quick to employ good techniques to achieve effective learning. In addition, it expects new teachers to know the importance of data analysis to good lesson and course planning.

The professional development program links directly to the needs of students and teachers. It is driven by a thorough evaluation of data and other information about the school. The school cabinet keeps a watchful brief over the needs of students and teachers, modifying the programs, where necessary. The school is particularly good at using the strengths of its staff to promote and effect development, as well as drawing on the skills of external professionals. The teachers recognize that they are in a challenging job, but know the school supports them extremely well and provides immense opportunities for professional development and personal growth.

The principal and assistant principals frequently observe lessons. Feedback is immediate, valuable and supportive, leading to immediate changes to further improve students' learning. Team meetings are frequent and work strongly in the interests of the students. The high level of collaboration ensures that interim evaluations confirm successful outcomes, or identify necessary revisions. This collaboration happens consistently at all levels across the school. The school carries out comprehensive planning for the next year towards the end of the current school year. Teachers working in the same grade do this initially and then the development plan receives further refinements at cabinet meetings before the final document is shared with all staff.

The students, parents and teachers have great respect for the principal. The school has a very strong capacity to maintain its high standards and continue to improve. The school runs extremely smoothly. Procedures are clear and known by all. The additional support services and partnerships align their work to the goals and aims of the school.

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 works to the specific goals in its development plan. At scheduled meetings, the staff evaluate the plan using diagnostic assessments, including the schools 'Do Your Own' assessments. They then make appropriate modifications. The teachers keep accurate and well-ordered records of assessments to ensure their teaching appropriately targets those who need most help. The staff hold frequent grade meetings to discuss students' progress and make changes to plans, resources or levels of specific intervention.

At the heart of the work of all the staff are the personal welfare, social development and academic successes of its students. Regular diagnostic assessments ensure that teachers know the achievement of individuals and this knowledge drives further improvements. However, there is no specific assessment mechanism to enable teachers and senior leaders to see easily whether students' progress is high enough.

Informed leadership and management teams evaluate progress towards the goals set for improvement at different points during the school year. This high degree of professional flexibility makes a significant, positive impact on standards. Teachers willingly respond and make changes that are effective in raising students' achievements.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Magnet School of Leadership in the 21 st Century (PS 172)	∅	✓	+
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