



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Marlboro School

Public School 177

**346 Avenue P
Brooklyn
NY 11024**

Principal: Alan Kurland

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Marlboro School, Public School 177, is an elementary school with 866 students from kindergarten through grade 5. It is a neighborhood school and is multi-ethnic. About 40% of students are White and just over 30% are Asian, mostly Chinese. The remainder of the student roll is mainly Hispanic with 2% Black. This year almost 9% are special education students and just over 27% are English language learners. Seventy-three percent of the students are eligible for Title 1 Funding. Attendance rates, at above 94%, are above the City average.

The school is housed in a purpose built 5 storey building which is currently being refurbished. It is well resourced. The students benefit from a variety of projects and partnerships in which the school is engaged, including those with Columbia University, New York University, the YMCA, the Federation of Italian American Organizations and various community organizations.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Systems of data collection, analysis and interpretation are well embedded across the school and are used to inform curricula and students' programs.
- A good range of well attended extra-curricular activities have been introduced to broaden the curriculum and to support students needing extra help.
- All staff plan and work collaboratively and have a high level of commitment to the school, students, principal and parents.
- There is strong leadership by the principal and assistant principals which gives ownership to teachers and ensures the smooth running of the school.
- Teachers are well developed professionally, are enthusiastic, dedicated and hard working and demand and receive high levels of achievement from their students.
- Lessons are well planned and show differentiation and individualized goal setting.
- Results are consistently high, with few significant differences related to ethnicity or gender.
- Teachers and lessons are matched to students' individual learning styles and specific needs wherever possible.
- There is a great emphasis on reading across the school with several thousand books available for students and parents to take home, including some in ethnic languages.
- Students enjoy learning and respond well to their teachers, being enthusiastic, well-behaved, polite and considerate, both to each other and to adults.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop internal data to identify the ethnicity and gender of students to allow for internal monitoring.
- Although there is strong evidence of individualized goal setting, it is not always carried out on formal basis using consistent methods.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal and all other staff form a strong team who work very hard, with energy and commitment. The curriculum has been broadened, with extra opportunities for enrichment such as sport, drama, band, computer club, dance and chess, and deepened by providing additional classes in English language arts and mathematics which are mandatory for some and voluntary for any others who wish to partake. Classes are also provided to teach English to parents who have recently arrived in the country.

There is a strong emphasis on reading in the school and numerous books are available all around the school for students to read and borrow, and for parents to borrow to read aloud to their students. Workshops have been held for both the staff and parents to learn how best to read aloud.

The principal believes that the staff are the key to student success and they, the principal and administrators work collaboratively to enable each child to reach their full potential, individualizing targets and programs wherever possible. Staff have high expectations of themselves and the students and this has led to consistently high levels of achievement.

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.

There are excellent systems in place for collecting, analyzing and interpreting data, with assessment carried out formally four times per year and informal monitoring ongoing. The instructional team meets monthly to analyze and interpret the data and grade meetings take place frequently, with English and mathematics coaches present alongside a member of the administration team. This has enabled the school to achieve well by early intervention, timely support and appropriate enrichment activities.

The school closely monitors progress on an individualized basis, monitoring each child against him or herself, but this means that internal data is not broken down according to ethnicity or gender, making it difficult to set achievement targets for these specific groups of students. It also compares its data with that of similar schools

Internal data results include the aggregated results of English language arts and mathematics assessments, item skills analysis from grow reports and interim assessments, 'monitoring for results', early childhood literary assessment system 2, portfolios and teacher evaluation. The school is hoping to implement a more precise monitoring tool in mathematics, similar to 'monitoring for results' in literacy, to be used in conjunction with the existing mathematics tools.

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

All goal setting is collaborative. At the beginning of the school year, grade leaders and instructional teams meet to set goals and select programs at grade, class and individual level resulting from data analysis. Those students mandated for extra support have programs decided by staff. Other programs are determined by a combination of staff, administration and the individual student who can choose which enrichment activities to attend.

The three common preparation sessions for each grade per week allows staff to work collaboratively to discuss students, set goals and monitor programs. However there is, as yet, no common formalized system for recording these decisions, other than from meetings minutes, so monitoring of these processes is inconsistent.

After school there are extra classes in English language arts and mathematics. Those students in greatest need of improvement are mandated to attend these classes but they are open to other students in the grade who would like to come. Non-mandated students can attend a range of enrichment activities after school and on Saturdays. These are often in collaboration with outside agencies such as the YMCA. Both the mandatory and voluntary enrichment sessions are very well attended. The school cites this extra-curricular activity as one reason for the consistently high achievement across the school.

All classes are mixed ability apart from the collaborative team teaching class in each grade, which is double staffed by teachers supported by a para-professional. The school has gradually adopted the ‘push-in’ method of English language learning support, where the specialist teacher works with individual or small groups of students in the classroom, rather than the ‘pull-out’ method, when students are taken out for their language support. This has meant that English language learners do not miss out on the lesson, the English language support teacher can work more collaboratively with the class teacher and the learners feel more included within the class. Internal data shows this system has benefited English language learning with an improvement in overall achievement.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to come in to the school and many do on a regular basis. There is a 100% parent attendance in the week of the bi-annual parents’ evenings, when students’ progress and individualized plans can be discussed.

Workshops are held for parents to help raise the achievement of their children. For example, when a famous author, an expert on reading aloud, gave professional development for the staff, a workshop was devised for parents on how to read aloud using the same methods as those given to the staff. The school also runs twice-weekly sessions for parents recently arrived in the country to improve their English language skills.

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.

Although the school has been exempted from using the New York City curriculum, because it is high achieving, it has chosen to continue to do so. The school's partnership with Columbia University has enhanced the teaching of reading and writing by providing staff development which is shared across the school.

Each student’s record illustrates needs identified by the data and helps teachers, assisted by the coaches and administration, to set individual goals. However, as yet there is no formalized, consistent method of evaluation, although informal evaluation forms part of the grade meetings. This makes whole school monitoring difficult.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are based on needs driven by the student data. The principal has brought in outside speakers to facilitate improvements, such as the author already mentioned, and the enrichment program, which is run by school staff who are paid for the extra hours. This program is partly responsible for the good results in the school and is intended to be expanded to raise achievement even higher.

Staffing decisions are made on the basis of needs identified by data. For example, the school’s own staff are used in the enrichment program, which ensures continuity and high quality teaching. The cabinet makes regular visits to classes, on both a formal and informal basis and there is usually a cabinet member at grade meetings.

Students are enthusiastic about learning and show enjoyment in lessons. For example, in an after school English language arts class of grade 2 students, all 23 were actively engaged and focused, eager to give the correct answers. In a grade 1 mathematics class, students were trying their best to finish first, so they could write the correct answers on the blackboard. Students spoke enthusiastically about the school, especially the teaching staff and their lessons.

Student attendance is a high priority for the school. If a student is absent for two days, a valid reason must be given. If there is no valid documentation after three or four days, a home visit is made. The school strongly discourages parents from taking the student away during the academic year and has the capacity to remove the student from the school roll if this happens. This tough stance has ensured an attendance rate of almost 95%, above the City average.

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 are selected by the principal on the basis of qualifications, knowledge of teaching, dedication and high expectations for themselves, the school and the students. Data analysis and interpretation, to inform instruction, forms part of the interview process.

All new teachers are mentored internally by those more experienced and use is made of the New York City mentoring program. There is a very low turnover of staff.

The needs revealed by student data and the school's development plan drive professional development. There are regional meetings for mathematics, science and music teachers and also for coaches. The reading and writing scheme with Columbia University allows a different group of teachers each year to learn effective strategies and share best practice. There are four whole-school training days each year, two in August, one in January and one in March, which give the opportunity for whole-school training or training for specific groups to be carried out. Each month there is one session set aside for professional development in a formal staff conference.

Individual teachers are able to attend training opportunities provided by the region or private providers, according to school, staff or student need. Intervisitation is well-integrated, and is a key component of grade meetings, with coaches and the cabinet closely involved with professional development. This has ensured consistency of good practice.

In addition to formal classroom observations, the principal and assistant principals try to see every class every day on an informal basis, and student work and folders are seen. These visits are to observe learners rather than teachers, although visits are often followed up by discussion of the lesson with the relevant teacher. This ongoing monitoring has ensured speedy intervention where necessary and has highlighted good practice.

Several teams are involved in the planning, evaluation and revision of plans. These include the instructional team, the grade teams, the cabinet, the coaches and subject teams. As these teams work vertically as well as horizontally, information and action arising from the data is shared and acted upon.

The school has its own social workers and an educational psychologist. These staff take part in meetings about individual students, and are available for personal counseling. They help with emotional or personal problems which may be barriers to learning. The school's partnership with outside bodies such as the Federation of Italian American Organizations, the YMCA and the Council for Unity have been instrumental in expanding the curriculum and that with Columbia University Teachers' College has helped to raise standards in English language arts across 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

Structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, budgeting, the effectiveness of curricula, student engagement, attendance and professional development are well integrated into school procedures. These systems are consistently monitored by the principal and assistant principals, with contributions from other staff, to ensure alignment with student need.

Student portfolios are regularly monitored by the administration and the coaches, as well as the teachers themselves. State standards are translated into curriculum frameworks

and rubrics to share with the students. The rubric for success in class is written in child-friendly language so that the students can take part in the monitoring process.

All students are monitored individually. Formal testing, progress in class and parents' comments are triggers for identifying problems. Plans and goals are flexible so that strategies can be amended if required. For example, if a student is having difficulty with a particular teaching point in English language arts, it may be suggested that the student attends the relevant after-school class to support their learning.

As well as teachers, coaches and the administration, the school is able to access the expertise of its own educational psychologist, social workers and speech therapist to support individual students. The high levels of school, group, class and personal achievement are due in part to this flexibility alongside the speedy intervention of professionals.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is a full and detailed document which was written in collaboration with the staff. It is available for any member of staff to access. The driving force of the school is continuous improvement of achievement by every child.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Marlboro School (PS 177)	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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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