



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 72

**131 East 104th Street
New York
NY 10029**

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Reviewer: Mike Sutton

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The school serves a culturally diverse, multilingual community in East Harlem. There are 599 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Eighty nine percent of the students are Hispanic with 60% speaking Spanish as their first language. Black students make up around 9% of the school's population. More than a third of the students are English language learners and this proportion is rising steadily. There are 115 special education students and the school has self-contained special education classes at all grades. Ninety three percent of the students have Title 1 entitlement which is a higher proportion than for City schools overall. Attendance is 92.5% and compares well with similar and City schools.

The school engages a range of services to enhance the curriculum. These include the Midori music program to provide music instruction during the school day and instrument tuition after school; the Studio in the School program to enhance instruction in fine arts; and the Randall Island science project to give 4th grade students experience of practical science. The school also accesses local swimming facilities for different classes each year. There are bilingual classes at all grades and home language enrichment classes in kindergarten through grade 3.

The acting principal took up position in November 2006 having been assistant principal for the previous 6 years. The school is currently without an assistant principal. The numbers enrolled have reduced substantially in recent years due to local school reorganization and demographic changes. A small but steady number of students join the school mid-year, some transferring as a result of parental preference.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The acting principal has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provides clear, authoritative leadership in the successful drive for continuous improvement.
- The school maintains good discipline, good levels of attendance and very positive relations between students and teachers.
- There is a very good climate for learning and the majority of students, including English language learners, achieve well.
- The school gathers a wide range of good quality data on students' progress.
- Intervention programs are appropriate, well planned and help students make good progress.
- Staff teamwork is a very strong feature which underpins the school's recent improvements.
- There is a broad curriculum which engages students and offers many ways for them to succeed.
- There are good systems to ensure students' home language is maintained and developed.
- There is a very well structured program of professional development for staff.
- The school makes good use of computer technology for gathering data on student achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Resolve, as quickly as possible, the vacancy for assistant principal in order to strengthen further the leadership team.
- Prioritize the actions already identified as needed for continued improvement and set time scales and targets to achieve these.
- Continue to develop staff skills in planning differentiated work for their students.
- Continue to develop and refine the use of data to explore more deeply potential differences in performance by groups of students in different grades.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with some well-developed features.

The school has made very substantial improvements in recent years and students' achievements in State and City tests are above those of schools in similar circumstances. The key factors in this improvement have been increased use of data on student progress; a relentless focus on raising students' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics; and well organized professional development for all staff. The staff work well in teams and a culture of constant learning has been established among students and staff alike. The school gathers a very wide range of data on student progress. This provides a very good base for staff to plan and target work for different groups of students. The quality of this differentiated planning is still uneven. The school knows this and has focused professional development on improving staff confidence and ability in this respect. Data is used very well to determine when intervention support is needed for students who find learning more difficult. The support they get is of good quality and the data shows that these students often rapidly make up lost ground. Special education students increasingly move from self-contained to general classes.

The school has broadened and enriched the curriculum. Lessons in music, opportunities to learn instruments, expertise from visiting artists, swimming sessions and specific lessons in Spanish, provide many new and exciting opportunities for students. As one student said, 'We have lots of chances to do well'. The school has also introduced computer studies, taught in the new computer technology room, although computers in classrooms are underused. The school is very well led by the acting principal and supported well by other senior staff, particularly the three coaches who spearhead the curriculum developments in literacy and mathematics. However, without an assistant the substantial management workload falls on relatively few shoulders.

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.

The school gathers a wide range of good quality data. Much of this derives from the 'Reading First' program used in kindergarten through grade 3. This program requires regular assessment of students and the school does this meticulously, making good use of technology in the process. It is not uncommon to see a teacher or assistant sitting in a quiet area assessing a student's reading and understanding of text while recording data on a small palm-held device. The information is then uploaded and analyzed quickly and efficiently in order to guide the planning of new work for the student.

In other grades, statutory assessments are supported well through progress evaluations that are part of the programs of work, as for example in mathematics. Teachers also make frequent individual assessments, for example, through routine spelling tests as well as from general observations of students' work and progress. The staff who provide specific

help to individuals, as well as those who teach the Spanish speakers, maintain a very clear understanding of the steps the students are making because they make constant checks and keep regular records during lessons. The end result is that these students get work of the right difficulty, make good progress and develop the skills needed to become more independent in their learning. The principal has a very good understanding of how well the school is doing overall, through analysis of assessment data. She knows how well it is doing compared to other schools and how much it has improved in recent years. She has a good grasp of the school's overall strengths and areas for development and targets are set for improvement this year, but not further ahead. These targets are demanding but achievable. The senior staff analyze the data to look at relative performance of different groups of students across the school as a whole, but analysis needs to go deeper to tease out less evident issues such as potential differences between boys and girls in different grades.

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 teachers have a very good understanding of the performance of each student in their classes. They keep detailed records and use this information very effectively to plan for intervention and additional support for individuals who are not making enough progress. These intervention strategies have a big impact and students' learning is often accelerated so they can access the same work as the rest of the class. Teamwork is a major strength of the school and a relentless focus on continuous improvement is rooted in everything the school does. In recent years the school has concentrated on developing a collaborative approach to evaluation and planning. The staff meet regularly in grade teams and grade leaders also meet as a team. This approach ensures that the issues identified feed back to senior management level and senior management have clear lines of communication to all staff. As a result, common problems are shared and discussed and professional development is planned precisely. This is aimed at improving further the quality of work in the classroom and to meet the needs of groups of students as well as individuals. Coaches play a pivotal role in addressing areas of staff insecurity or uncertainty about aspects of the curriculum. They model lessons, teach alongside other staff or help plan appropriate work. They find resources and equipment and arrange and deliver high quality professional development sessions. At present, the staff at all levels are intent on making improvements in the near future. Longer-term goals for grades or groups of students are less clear because these are not set with sufficient clarity by senior leaders. The school has already identified the need to improve the use of data in areas of the curriculum such as science and social studies, but no clear timescales are established for this.

Communications with parents have improved steadily and there are sufficient opportunities for parents to discuss their children's work with their teachers. Teachers establish good relations with parents and have a secure overview of the needs of individuals when they start school. The parent/teacher association is making substantial contributions to the development of the school. The school is reaching out to the community through specific educational programs for adults, such as sessions explaining the schooling and assessment system.

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 with some well-developed features.

The school has risen to the challenge to do better. Weaknesses identified in early literacy skills have been addressed well through the ‘Reading First’ initiative. The school has backed this through budgeting and organizational decisions. There is a very wide range of good quality books for students of all ages and levels of achievement. These have been very well organized into levels of difficulty. This, together with the data feeding through from regular assessments now enables teachers to match the book to the students’ needs with precision. Students say they enjoy reading and get great help in selecting books of the right interest and difficulty level.

The school has made imaginative changes to widen the curriculum. These are having a positive impact on students’ progress. Science is taught regularly to upper grades, although resources are in need of further improvement. Regular lessons in Spanish help ensure that students develop good communication skills in their home language. Music tuition is of good quality, although resources are minimal. Students speak with enthusiasm of the opportunities now available to learn to play an instrument such as flute or guitar. Art projects too, contribute to a broader range of experiences for students. The new technology room gives good opportunities for staff to teach computer skills and make use of the latest technology, but computers are not used with sufficient regularity in classrooms. Students enjoy these wider opportunities. Teachers are able to show where individuals have succeeded in these new areas and their confidence and development in academic areas have been boosted as a result. Teachers use the data on student performance to plan work of differing levels of demand for groups and individuals. However, this approach is still patchy and better in English than in mathematics and other subject areas. The school has rightly identified this as an area for professional development. In upper grades, students say that the work they are asked to do is usually at about the right level of difficulty. On the few occasions where it is not, it is more likely to be too easy than too hard. The students engage well in their lessons. They clearly enjoy school and feel relaxed with their teachers who are all deeply concerned for each individual in their charge. Attendance is high because the school takes a strong line on absences and checks immediately when students do not show up.

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.

Senior members of staff fully understand their role in further improving students’ progress. The school has very good levels of well qualified staff and the teachers are determined to give students the best education they can. They are extremely well supported by the coaches, assistant staff, administrative staff and those who help meet the needs of English language learners. The school makes appropriate reference to outside organizations where necessary, to support and help students and parents. The school is a very orderly community that runs well on a day-to-day basis. The school increasingly works through grade and grade leader teams. This team work is steering improvements well as teachers more frequently discuss areas of common difficulty and share ideas on how to address them. Such information is shared openly and in a spirit of mutual cooperation and

professionalism. Coaches play a key role in addressing areas identified for improvement, through modeling lessons or leading professional development. For example, one professional development session was pinpointed at helping teachers improve their skills in putting questions to a wide range of students. This was an issue which the teachers had themselves identified in team meetings as needing attention. Discussion was well focused and many ideas were shared with enthusiasm. The wealth of data now gathered is not sufficiently developed to extract the most useful information that will take students' learning onwards. The school recognizes this issue. Teams use data well to review the effectiveness of their work, particularly for individual students.

The principal is widely respected by teachers, students and parents and she has a very secure overview of the school. Walk throughs; and formal observations provide teachers with an accurate picture of where additional help and guidance is needed. She has the capacity to continue to drive through improvements, but needs a full leadership team to share the workload and to improve further the analysis and use of the data which the school gathers. Teachers have opportunities to observe each other teach, particularly in classes across the same grade.

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 proficient.

The teachers make good use of data on individual students to check progress, particularly for those students identified as at risk of not making the required grade in State and City tests. They know what each student needs to improve. They also monitor closely the progress of the English language learners and special education students. The right sort of adjustments are made to meet students' needs, such as moving from Spanish to English based classes or from special education to general classes. The school has a good view of the improvements it wants to make in students' achievements over this year. The targets it has set itself are demanding but achievable and reflect the steady upward trend of recent years. The school does not yet make sufficient use of analyzed data to look at the performance over a longer period of time of particular groups of students. Nor does it set more distant improvement targets. The positive impact of curriculum initiatives such as improved opportunities for music and art need better evaluation to illustrate their effect on students' achievement in other subject areas. The Comprehensive Educational Plan sets out a very full, wide ranging and accurate review of the school's work and the overall outcomes for students grade by grade. It exposes strengths and weaknesses clearly, comparing itself with similar schools as a benchmark. The plan contains a large number of relevant action points, but too many to be accomplished in one year. The plan does not identify which ones are the most crucial to raising students' achievement and should therefore be tackled first, or which ones need to be addressed in the medium or longer term. Actions do not always link precisely to the developments that the data suggests are needed. For example, the analysis of data shows some potential unevenness in the performance of boys and girls, particularly in mathematics. The action points do not indicate how this might be explored further or how any problems which come to light might be addressed. Similarly, the plan correctly evaluates technology as in need of further work, but does not go on to show how or when this will be tackled.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 72	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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	