



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Adolph S. Ochs School

Public School/Intermediate School 111

**440 West 53 Street
New York
NY 10019**

Principal: Irma Medina

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Reviewer: Ronnie Solow

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 Adolph S Ochs School is a pre-kindergarten through grade 8 school located in the Hell's Kitchen area of Manhattan. The school serves a culturally diverse student body of 556 students comprised of 70% Hispanic, 11% White, 12% Black and 7% from Asian or other backgrounds. Special education students comprise 15% of the student body and are served in collaborative team teaching classes. English language learners, served in the pull-out model, comprise 12% of the students. Both proportions are slightly higher than similar and City school averages.

The principal is in her second year in the job, but previously served as the assistant principal for five years. Under her leadership, suspensions and other incidents have been significantly reduced from past years.

Attendance at 92% is the same as that of similar and City schools. The school receives Title I funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a knowledgeable educator who has implemented a strong academic emphasis.
- The principal is highly visible and knows the students well.
- The principal and assistant principal work well together to implement improvement and effect positive change.
- A good number and varied range of partnerships bring extensive additional resources to the school community and support to learning.
- Teachers use available data to match instruction with the wide range of student needs.
- Professional development supports the development of classroom instruction well.
- Classroom teachers and student teachers plan together daily to ensure a consistent approach to learning.
- Rules, regulations and routines are well known and followed by students and staff so the school runs smoothly on a daily basis.
- Parents appreciate the accessibility and openness of the principal.
- The building is well-maintained and decorated with colorful displays of student work, charts and artifacts.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to extend professional development in the use of systematic data analysis to improve classroom outcomes.
- Establish a formal schedule of teacher inter-visitations to observe good classroom practices.
- Formalize procedures to notify parents about student test scores, levels and goals, and so increase parental involvement in their children's education.
- Develop teacher skill in the use of data to match instruction with successive stages of learning.
- Provide additional professional development to expand teacher competence in lesson structure and differentiation.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal has put programs and structures in place that emphasize high expectations within a culture that all students can and will achieve well. The established and newly-appointed assistant principals have clearly defined roles in leading school improvement, with one concentrating on the education of students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5 and the other in grades 6 through 8.

The principal and assistant principal have a good understanding of the use of data to drive instruction and improve academic outcomes. Extensive professional development in this area has been offered to all staff and is an ongoing feature of the school's work in its drive to improve student achievement.

The school's new literacy program, based on the Teachers' College reading and writing workshop method, has been put in place for this school year. Systematic and focused professional development is assisting the staff to become more comfortable with the workshop model of instruction. These practices are beginning to take hold with the targeted assistance from the principal, assistant principal, coaches and staff developers.

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 uses many forms of data, including City and State assessments and a range of other standardized tests and its own assessments to gain a secure knowledge and understanding of students' performance and progress. The literacy and mathematics coaches and staff developers are assisting the teachers in the appropriate administration and accurate interpretation of the data for their class and individual students in tested subjects.

The principal has articulated the importance of the use of available data and the information it imparts about each grade, class and student during faculty, grade and individual teacher meetings. She has made the use of data and its understanding a priority for the staff. She meets with each teacher on a three-month cycle to review the assessment results for each student in the class. As a result, teachers are beginning to understand how to use the available data to plan for their classes in literacy and mathematics.

The principal and staff examine the data for special education students and English language learners in each class and grade. Comparisons with similar schools are noted by the principal. In addition, comparisons by class, grade and ethnic groupings give staff up to date information about student performance and progress across the school.

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.

A range of stakeholders, including parent representatives, participate in the creation of the Comprehensive Education Plan. The principal and assistant principal incorporate the use of data as the basis to establish the learning goals for the school. The Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal’s goals and objectives set forth the focused plan for the school. Each action plan includes measurable outcomes and a benchmark calendar for the attainment of each goal. A range of professional development activities have helped teachers to use data more effectively in planning for their class to ensure students reach these goals.

Special education students, English language learners, and students held over are given particular attention. The academic intervention services and the pupil personnel teams have planned interventions that target these students effectively. Additional support for struggling students is provided in the early morning sessions, pull-out programs during the school day, and in after-school tutoring and other programs run by specialists and classroom teachers. However, there are still a number of students who are not improving significantly as they move up the grades, because their goals and progress have not been tracked closely until recently. Every grade, from kindergarten through 8, has a collaborative team teaching class. Tier I interventions are monitored prior to a student being referred to the academic intervention services team or pupil personnel team for more intensive intervention.

Students and parents express gratitude for the changes made over the past two years. Both groups cite the change in the school climate into a more orderly and structured learning environment. The parent-teacher association board members and the parent coordinator are constantly reaching out for additional parental involvement, which up to now has been poor. Activities to expand parental involvement have been offered with the intention of sharing high performance expectations. Report cards, progress reports, phone calls, parent meetings, parent workshops and promotion-in-doubt letters keep parents well informed about student progress. A process to inform parents about student assessment results is being developed.

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 follows the mandated curriculum. A new literacy curriculum, Teachers’ College reading and writing workshop, has been instituted this year. The mathematics program uses Everyday Mathematics in grades kindergarten through 5 and Impact Mathematics in grades 6 through 8. Science and social studies follow the State-mandated curricula. Physical education, technology and arts are also integral elements in the school program.

Data is used sufficiently well to differentiate instruction for most students for much of the time. This is especially so for students who need most help to learn. Every student has a conference with the teacher about their work. Conference notes and running records are

kept by the teachers but are not yet consistently good across classes. Consequently, not all teachers feel comfortable about how to use the notes effectively to differentiate instruction and support every student's learning. Most, but not all, staff have the necessary skills to integrate the data information to inform their classroom practice. The principal is cognizant of the needs of her staff and has plans to provide additional training in all aspects of the use of data to improve the class, grade and school performance.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are made via an option committee and based on the outcomes of data analysis. They are targeted to the classroom and instructional support. For example, in order to support the new literacy program, an additional budget priority is the purchase of appropriate books for the classroom leveled libraries.

The school puts equal emphasis on students' personal develop and so makes sure programs such as aspects of social studies and the conflict resolution program support the development of social and emotional skills effectively. Students are clear that they feel comfortable about talk to adults and tare confident to ask for help if needed.

Attendance and lateness are constantly being monitored and so the attendance rate has risen by almost two percentage points this year. Students who are persistently late are targeted for early morning wake-up calls, must sign into school upon arrival and are monitored daily for attendance and lateness. The parent coordinator and attendance teacher follow up with families through phone calls and home visits when needed. An attendance improvement incentive program rewards students and parents with tickets to Broadway shows.

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.

The school staff are hired through a school-based option committee. Resumes are reviewed against clearly identified criteria in reading, writing, balanced literacy, mathematics, the use of data to differentiate instruction and leadership capacity. Potential staff members are invited to teach a demonstration lesson in the after-school program to evaluate their qualities.

Professional development is based on the Teachers' College program instituted this year. Teachers in each grade, including special education staff and English as second language teachers, are participating in professional development days at Teachers' College. They are responsible for sharing materials and skills at their weekly grade meetings. As a result, teachers are beginning to feel comfortable using the workshop model. The staff developer and coaches provide additional training in the differentiation of instruction and all of the elements used in each of the curriculum programs through giving demonstration mini-lessons or teaching alongside classroom teachers. Grade team meetings give good additional opportunities for planning, strategizing and sharing and are securing a commitment from all staff to deliver instruction in an effective way in all classes.

Formal and informal observations provide good opportunities to give feedback to teachers about the effectiveness of their teaching methods. A walk-through checklist supports this process well. Inter-class and inter-school visits are encouraged for staff to observe and share good practice, but as yet are not regularly scheduled.

Teachers meet weekly in grade teams to prepare lessons and materials, share professional development materials, and strategize as a group. Coaches, assistant principal, the principal, and staff developers work with the grade teams led by a point teacher. This process is beginning to help teachers to support one another and to share effective practices. One aspect of the weekly meetings is the focus on using the Teachers' College data to focus on the specific needs of each student in the class. The principal recognizes the need for monitoring these strategies and providing the time to master these skills related to the use of data.

The principal is highly visible around the school. She has made her expectations clear. Rules and regulations are explicitly stated in the staff and student handbooks, in bulletins and newsletters. Students, parents and staff state that the school is a calmer environment and more conducive to learning under her leadership. Her open-door policy encourages positive interactions. She is respected and has good capacity to effect further improvement.

Many external partnerships including with the New York Times Foundation, ING, Community Word Project, Ballet Hispanico, National Dance Institute, Making Books Sing, American Place Theater, Epic Theater Company, and many others bring extensive additional resources and support to the school. The student council creates community service projects for the school such as coat drives, food drives, and Penny Harvest. The council members serve as peer mediators in the conflict resolution program. This program contributes to the school's orderly and smooth operation and is one aspect of the successful use of youth development to help reach its behavioral goals.

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.

There are adequate systems in place for monitoring the school's work and evaluating progress towards meeting its goals outlined in action plans. The Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's goals and objectives outline the school's goals, interim steps and the assessment measures used to evaluate its success. Reviews of the school's work are ongoing and assessment data is used to measure progress towards reaching its goals. A range of teams meet regularly and so every aspect of the school's work is reviewed each month.

Much of the work is led by the principal who is still building staff expertise in the use of data to monitor and evaluate improvement. The principal meets with each teacher on a three-month cycle to review classroom data and revise plans based on the data, using both formal and informal assessment information. Grade teams are constantly talking about students' progress, strengths and weaknesses that require addressing. Constant revisions are made throughout the school year to adapt goals and programs to meet the full range of students' needs in response to this data review. An overall evaluation at the end of each year leads to successive phases of goal-setting and action planning and so each year's improvement plans builds on the previous year's achievements.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Adolph S Ochs School (PS/IS 111)	∅	✓	+
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 are characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	