

Intermediate School 114: East Side Middle School

East Side Middle School

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**1458 York Avenue
Manhattan
NY, 10010**

Principal: David Getz

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Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

This is a well-established middle school with 343 students in grades 6 to 8. On entry to school, students display a wide range of skills and experiences which are generally above average. Due to the high performance of students, the school is exempt from the mandated curriculum. East Side Middle is designed to be a high achieving accelerated school but is receiving an increasing number of students who do not reflect this profile. The school has recently introduced a class with Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) to support their needs. Students come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and a few are English language learners. Approximately 15% Title 1 Eligible. At the time of the review, the assistant principal was on maternity leave.

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Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Leadership and management are well-developed and this ensures that the school continues to build on its successes.
- The principal is strongly committed to the students and has a high profile within the school. He provides an excellent model both as an instructional leader and administrator.
- Staff works very well as a team and has a clear vision for the future development of the school. Staff morale is high.
- The climate for learning is particularly well-developed. This helps students to develop excellent attitudes towards their work and interest in world issues.
- Students reach high standards, and this prepares them well for their future education.
- Teaching is well-developed and effectively promotes learning. Students say that learning is fun and they rise to the high expectations set by staff. Staff serves as good role models for students' learning and social development.
- Teachers use a range of assessments to identify learning needs and develop effective intervention strategies. They know their students very well.
- The school is responding actively and effectively to the new challenge of increased academic diversity (i.e. CTT inclusion class).
- The school works well as a community to target the needs of struggling students and to design programs to help them succeed.
- The school provides particularly good support for the students' personal, social, and emotional development. Consequently, students behave very well during lessons. They also show increasing levels of maturity and confidence as they are promoted through the grades.
- Staff members regularly review the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all students. Learning is enhanced well through the integration of subjects.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop the Collaborative Team Teaching program.
- Continue to develop teaching and learning by greater differentiated instruction.
- Continue to develop the use of data to help get a clearer picture of students' progress and attainments in both the short and long-term.
- Further develop the use of technology to ensure a wider range of teaching styles and more opportunities for students to develop their skills in use of computers.

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Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed, high performing school.

It is very effective at challenging its more capable students and effectively supports those who experience difficulty with their learning. Consequently, students make very good progress and perform well. Provision for students' personal, social and emotional development is particularly effective and students flourish in this stimulating learning environment. Leadership and management are very effective because senior managers are totally committed to constant improvement and meeting the needs of their students. Effective management systems ensure that leaders are aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The areas for development identified in this report are based on enabling a well-developed school to become even better.

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

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient with many well developed features.

Senior managers have a positive approach to the collection and use of data to help staff improve the effectiveness of their instruction and to support their aim for an education that looks beyond test scores. The school has a successful record of using qualitative data because teachers are diligent in the way they get to know their students in this small intimate setting. Students' steps in learning are recorded after observations, discussions with students and a review of their work. This helps to build a comprehensive picture of each student and identify those who need additional support or challenge. Teachers know their students well. Analysis of data takes place across the school, throughout grades and within classes so that teachers can identify how well students' are progressing. Although the school has always used quantitative data to identify the students' attainment in tests and assessments, and consequently their progress over time, less focus has been placed on identifying any differences in attainment according to gender, ethnic background or other grouping. The collection and use of data is developing so that with a new grading system the school aims to have a much clearer indication of the impact of its work. Currently, the analysis of data is not always as useful as it might be, for example, when making comparisons with similar schools, because the information is frequently out of date by the time the school receives it.

Quality Statement 2: 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.

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Effective systems for collecting data on students' progress and attainment are used well to identify their specific needs and see how well they are progressing. For example, because the school identified that more students were experiencing difficulty with their learning, the 6 grade CTT class was established at the start of this academic year. Insufficient time has passed to evaluate the overall effectiveness of this provision. Teaching is generally well matched to the students' needs so their learning accelerates well. More capable students are also well supported through the presentation of additional challenge and work set which is above the performance expected for their age. Regular meetings take place between the principal, Assistant principal, guidance counselor, school psychologist and special education teachers to monitor the school's "at risk" and struggling students. Intervention programs are developed to meet their specific needs and these are reviewed regularly. Individual education plans with goals that are realistic and appropriately challenging are developed for special education students. Staff is constantly trying to improve their practice and the work of the special education staff is instrumental in helping staff to face the new challenge of increased academic diversity.

Staff has high expectations and students respond well to these. Current information indicates that students do very well in English language arts. As a whole they read and write very well and express themselves eloquently, with confidence. Students are encouraged to publish their work and some are successful. This particularly good progress stems from teachers knowing what students need to do next to improve their work.

Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The curriculum is well selected in relation to the school's goals of academic excellence and the desire to produce students with enquiring minds who are aware of what is happening in the world and can effect change. This can be seen in the Humanities program which is based around challenging projects and is particularly effective at developing students' speaking and writing skills. The integration of English language arts within this program is proving to be very successful. Similarly, the eighth grade Science program is particularly exciting and challenging with a strong emphasis on developing students' skills of inquiry. Some excellent mathematics work can be seen but the school is aware of the need to continue to differentiate the curriculum more to meet the needs of a few students who struggle. Students enjoy the electives program where they learn new skills. In addition, the students also have the opportunity to participate in drama, clubs, student council, contests and social action projects which promote leadership and responsibility.

The principal regularly observes teaching and the information gained from this is used to support individual teachers as well as build up a picture of how the curriculum and resources should be developed. The information gained has also helped the principal to identify areas for development such as widening the range of teaching and learning styles through greater use of technology, and greater differentiated instruction in lessons. The newly established Collaborative Team Teaching program is developing well as teachers try to establish ways of supporting those students who sometimes find learning difficult.

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Teaching is frequently of a high quality. Instructional programs actively engage students so that the pace of learning is particularly good. Students say that learning is fun because teaching is good. Work is set at the correct level to ensure that they achieve well and are challenged appropriately. Students are also very positive about the personal and academic support they receive from all adults in the school. They say that the school is “homely” and that they “feel safe”. Teachers get to know them well and students feel able to confidently ask for support when needed. This is because they know their views are respected and this builds a level of trust between student and teacher.

The school has high levels of attendance. This is because students enjoy going to school and want to do well. Effective data analysis helps to identify trends in attendance and pinpoints those students who need to be monitored more closely. Effective support from the Parent Coordinator ensures that students and parents realize the importance of regular attendance. The principal is also closely involved in monitoring those few students with poorer attendance.

Quality Statement 4: 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.

The principal has a high profile and this is a key factor in the development of rigorous academic practice and the excellent climate for learning. Relationships are relaxed throughout with frequent discussions between staff and students which recognize students' interests and achievements. Strong working relationships between staff is based on a clear vision for the school with appropriate goals which reflect the school's mission statement and inform a clear program for development. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis because procedures are clear and followed by staff and students.

The appointment of new staff is taken very seriously. Criteria for appointments include academic rigor, a shared vision and understanding of the school's philosophy, and becoming “part of the team”. The high quality staff with a good range of experiences reflects the principal's success in recruitment.

Teachers respond very well to the Principals' leadership and staff morale is high. Many members of staff highlight the strengths of the principal and say that the school is very well led and managed. They feel well supported and consequently quickly develop confidence. This then allows them to try out new things in order to develop their practice. This is strongly encouraged by the principal. Professional development opportunities are very effective resulting in a school that is constantly seeking to improve. Regular discussions at grade meetings help to ensure that information on students gained from tests, assessments, observations, discussions and an examination of their work impacts on lesson planning so that the activities set match students' capabilities and ensures learning progresses at a good rate. Regular discussions with students ensure that they are aware of how to improve their work. Although the school recognizes the need to develop this work further, the success of their work is reflected in the particularly good progress that students make and their high performance.

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Quality Statement 5: 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.

Staff works well as a team and, through the sharing of ideas and expertise, are involved in the development of the school. They can clearly identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement and these reflect those identified during the review. Systems are particularly effective in identifying those students who need additional challenge or support as well as the need to adapt the curriculum and develop instruction. The school commits time and resources to providing additional classes to support students' learning, based on the careful analysis of their progress and needs. The requirements of special education students are also assessed carefully and work in this area is developing very well. Qualitative data is used particularly well and the school has recognized the potential benefits of improving the gathering and use of quantitative data. Key to the school's success is the students' excellent attitudes to learning, support from parents, the principal's leadership and the enthusiastic staff. The latter are keen to try different methodologies and adjust these over time based on the analysis of their effectiveness.

Other key observations

Students' personal, social and emotional education is very well-developed. This enables them to become increasingly confident and eager learners. As some students said, "We are able to be what we want to be" and "We are encouraged to be the best we can". Students are happy at school and feel cared for and valued. They feel part of the school community and are eager to contribute to its development. Students are also encouraged to investigate local and world events and the success of a UN Program reflects the excellent work of the school. They develop an impressive sense of personal and social responsibility through this work and taking part in a good range of charitable events. Parents and guardians are also very supportive of the school. They are kept up-to-date with how their children are progressing and become familiar with what is expected through parent/teacher meetings and attendance at the workshops.

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Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.	o	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English language arts, mathematics, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are "objective" when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards-based, • consistent across students, • capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice, <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the performance of different students to be compared, and • learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified. 			X
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>		X	
<p>1.3 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, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>		X	
Quality Statement 2: 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.	o	✓	+
<p>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 it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>			X
<p>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 warranting attention.</p>			X
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>			X
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>			X
<p>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</p>			X

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Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	o	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.			X
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.			X
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. 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
3.6 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
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X

Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	0	✓	+
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 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 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.			X

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Quality Statement 5: 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.	o	✓	+
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 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 interim 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 each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.			X