



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Manhattan School of the Arts

Public School 166

**132 West 89 Street
New York
NY 10024**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Manhattan School of the Arts is housed in a renovated 107 year old gothic building that has been commissioned as a New York City landmark. It serves approximately 600 students from pre-kindergarten to grade 5. The diverse school population comprises 47.9% White students, 19.2% Black students, 27.3% Hispanic students and 5.6% of students from Asian and other ethnic backgrounds.

Almost 13% of the school population are special education students and a further 11% are English language learners. The school's attendance rate, at 93.8% in 2005, was above the City average but below the average for similar schools. The building has good facilities for both the arts and technology. A large community room provides the space for several volunteer groups to tutor small groups of children during and after school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school leadership is very proactive, well organized, and goal oriented.
- All staff members work well together and are a collaborative team that share the mission of the school and contribute to its nurturing tone.
- The general education population is integrated very well with advanced students in the gifted and talented program.
- Budget and resources are creatively used to reduce the staff-to-student ratio, which enables plenty of individualized support and group instruction for all students.
- An extensive enrichment program focused on the arts provides all students with the opportunity to engage in dance, arts and crafts, band, music, ballet, and physical fitness.
- There is a strong gifted and talented program that contributes to rigorous work and that draws from a very diverse community.
- Teachers regularly observe the best teaching practices of their colleagues and coaches are constantly in classes modeling and mentoring teachers.
- The school is making great progress in academic achievement, reflecting the high expectations and commitment to learning of teachers and students.
- There is proactive participation of parents that supports the academic goals of the school and which schedules successful fund-raising activities that pay for instructional support personnel.
- The culture of the school values all students and celebrates their achievements extensively.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop more in-depth school plans and goals, using student data, for children with special needs.
- Use portfolios and samples of student work more often as school generated data to better inform academic achievement efforts and differentiation of instruction.
- Collect and use data from after school and outside partner activities to round out a comprehensive process of assessment aligned with the school's overall achievement plans and goals.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

One of the primary strengths of the Manhattan School for the Arts is how it integrates its general education population with its advanced students in its gifted and talented program. The culture of the school values all students and celebrates their achievements, whether high achievers or students in need of intervention. The staff has a comprehensive approach to its assessments of students, scheduling of additional services, and its monitoring of student progress. Every student at the school is treated equitably and benefits from a wealth of school resources. A proactive parent community engages in numerous volunteer efforts that includes extensive fund raising. This is highlighted by the efforts of one of its not-for-profit foundations that raises enough funds yearly to hire some 15 part time teacher assistants who work in each classroom to improve achievement. This effort facilitates smaller group instruction and individualized attention for students. The staff works collaboratively seeking input from even its newest teachers. Professional development is highly valued. All the above contributes to high academic performance for the whole school. The school lives up to its name by offering a broad range of enrichment activities. These activities are just now being used to add to the depth of data collection used by the administration for analyses. An effort has also begun to develop portfolios in depth to enrich the quantity and quality of student work used for rubrics and monitoring of progress.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

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

The school uses a wide range of formative and summative measures when it collects data. The administration facilitates the collection and dissemination of student data to all teachers from City-wide and State-wide examinations in English language arts and mathematics so that everyone is aware of the overall achievements of the students. In addition, periodic monitoring including running records, conferring notes and the scrutiny of both readers'/writers' notebooks and mathematics portfolios, enables the school to keep a close check on students' progress.

Regular support service meetings are used efficiently to update all data and thus guide decisions about interventions or referral for closer examination. There is a detailed picture documented for each student that is used systematically to indicate the next steps in learning. The principal has organized the extensive data set carefully so that it is easy to make comparisons across grades, classrooms and small groups. The information is further broken down by examination of gains within scale scores of classroom groupings and individual student's assessments. These systems have made the school more efficient in the monitoring of student progress and more accurate in its planning for support. Effective intervention procedures include academic assistance, programs for social development and accommodations for health issues.

The school is fully aware of the trends in performance over time and systematically notes its outcomes against those of similar schools in order to benchmark its own achievements. The relative performance of sub groups, such as boys and girls, is also carefully reviewed. A growth in the special education population is driving a closer look at how to service students in need in a more comprehensive manner.

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.

The principal has a goal-oriented approach that results in a consistent process of setting measurable goals for immediate and long term improvement in academic growth. Lack of progress by any student is quickly noted from periodic assessments by the teacher and then generates a further discussion with administrators and the school’s intervention team. As a result, timely and well-focused intervention plans are drawn up which are effectively implemented and monitored carefully. Students identified as in need of improvement, especially special education students, are subsequently well supported.

Goals are clearly laid out in documents that focus on the school as a whole and on each student and group of students. There is a current focus on providing challenging work for proficient and gifted students, for example. The staff carefully examines gains made by different student groups from one performance quartile to the next in English language arts and mathematics in order to sustain the improvement over time. In particular, planning includes the notation of discrepancies and “spikes’ in group scores to further inform plans and goals.

New performance goals for students are set after consultation with all the significant stakeholders. Parents are kept well informed about the curriculum and the progress that their children are making. Consultations enable parents to discuss with teachers the targets set for their children and ways in which support can be provided at home. Students themselves are aware of their goals and try their best to achieve them. In addition, volunteers such as ‘learning leaders’ tutor at-risk students throughout the school day. These collaborators, community based organizations and service providers are regularly consulted and have a strong voice in the overall planning and setting of goals for the school community.

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

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

The school, designated as an Accelerated Literacy Learning School, implements the mandated City curriculum effectively using literacy strategies from the workshop model. The administration uses and collects protocols on a monthly schedule that hold teachers accountable for producing good student outcomes. Daily literacy lessons must focus on the reading and writing workshop. Budget decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and the school’s focused plans. The standardized curriculum is enriched with many activities that engage students with exciting and challenging work. The school employs a literacy consultant who successfully coaches teachers to ensure calibration of

practice across grades. On site literacy and mathematics coaches effectively support teachers. Scheduling also supports focused plans for learning. As an example, time is made available for small group instruction in most subject areas where teachers work on particular skills and conference with individual students on their needs. Child-centered instruction is the priority. The school recognizes that extending its use of work portfolios to examine student progress will allow teachers to further differentiate instruction. Students are well behaved and are actively engaged in many activities scheduled by the school.

The school maintains an English as a second language academy as a focal point of its extended day activities. Grade 3 and 5 students who are classified as students at risk are strongly encouraged to attend the Saturday academy that is housed at a neighboring school. These students demonstrate improvement in their achievement. A parents' fund-raising activity funds the inclusion of additional instructional support by hiring a half day teaching aide for each classroom in the school. The school has a student attendance rate which is higher than the Citywide rate and equal to the rate for similar schools. Effective measures encourage good attendance.

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.

The school has a reputation as high achieving and smooth running, as seen by the large number of teachers who wish to work there. The principal is well respected and has effected change when necessary. He keeps on file hundreds of teacher applications from which he selects the best candidates for interviews. A team further interviews and prioritizes potential candidates by their experience, dedication to students, professional training in subject area and strengths that match up well with the established vacancy. Student teachers are monitored closely to gage their potential as future teachers. New teachers must demonstrate they are self reflective, can work in teams and have an ability to revise their instructional practices to better meet the needs of students.

The literacy and mathematics coaches are respected by the staff for leading workshops, visiting classrooms and modeling successful instructional strategies. Teachers are encouraged to engage in interclass visitations. Teachers select topics for professional training according to their own needs. Teams of teachers and administrators often go out of the building for professional development. Afterwards the training strategies that are acquired are turn keyed with other work teams in the school organization. Scheduling is kept flexible in order to facilitate these activities. Summative lesson observations are done as mandated, but much time is dedicated by the administration to doing informal visits and spot checks to ensure good classroom practices. Special attention is allotted to new teachers in the form of new teacher workshops, assigning of mentors and observation of master teachers. Laboratory sites for each grade have been established this year that highlight best practices occurring on site. Teams of teachers have made frequent visits to a sister school with already established laboratory site classrooms in order to observe their best practices.

The proximity to many of the City's cultural establishments provides an outstanding opportunity for the school to partner with institutions such as: Ballet Hispanico, Lincoln Center, the Richard Rogers Foundation, American Museum of Natural History, and the YMCA. The school does not yet effectively collect and use data from after school and outside partner activities to round out a comprehensive process of assessment aligned with the school's overall achievement plans and 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 well developed.

Many effective systems enable student's progress to be monitored and supported. Results from achievement and youth development reports exhibit how effective these systems are at improving student outcomes. School plans and goals are frequently reviewed and revised throughout the school year, especially after accessing interim assessment data. Student data is collected for the overall school population. Information in data binders demonstrate how comparisons are made across schools, classrooms and groups of students. The information is further broken down by gender, ethnicity and special needs. The principal, in consultation with his assistant principal and selected staff members, analyze the data looking for discrepancies in progress and achievement every few weeks. The school is effective in its use of team evaluations. Frequently scheduled meetings of intervention teams conduct diagnostic assessments of progress and attempt to reveal objective measures of the success of intervention strategies and assignment of personnel. Academic intervention services are monitored for success on a six week cycle. Interventions and programs are often revised or changed if they are not working. The Comprehensive Education Plan, as another example, highlights how the school successfully engages in flexible realignment of practices and resources that result in improved student academic and social outcomes.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Manhattan School for the Arts (PS 166)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X