

Mott Hall II Middle School

Mott Hall II Middle School

Middle School 862

**234 W109th Street
Manhattan
NY 10025**

Principal: Mary Moss

Dates of review: May 30 – 31, 2006

**Reviewer: Roger Fry
Cambridge Education**

Mott Hall II Middle School

Content Of The Report

Part 1: The School Context

Background information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

What is the school's overall performance

How well does it meet New York City's evaluation criteria

Other key observations

Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

Mott Hall II Middle School

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

The school educates approximately 320 students in 6th through 8th grades from the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

Class sizes are around 25 students per class. Students' standards on entry into 6th grade are slightly higher than average, typically students are at level 3 and some are at level 4. The school has low proportions of special education students and English second language students.

Mott Hall II Middle School

Part 1: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is popular and over subscribed.
- Students attain high standards compared with all and similar schools. Standards have risen since 2003.
- The school is well managed. There is a positive culture of reflection, hard work and honesty in the school. Scheduling meets students' needs effectively.
- Partnerships are well-developed. The school is a model for others to see and to learn from.
- The curriculum interests and engages students and is aligned to the school's priorities. The science fair, for example, is a very successful way of developing students' knowledge.
- The school's process of self-evaluation has led to an accurate self-evaluation form. (SEF) The school has identified many of the recommendations below.
- Students' relationships, behavior, and attitudes to work are good.
- Students realize much of their potential. They are mature, well engaged in their work and understand how doing well at school will help them in the future.
- Students are advised well by the school. Grade 6 has a good induction program about taking responsibility for their learning.
- Vulnerable students are well supported and many make good progress.
- Students are given good feedback; they have good individual knowledge of their strengths and areas for development. There are close checks on students' individual progress.
- There is a good emphasis on preparation for college.
- Teachers have expertise; they make lessons interesting, develop students' thinking capacity well and engage them purposefully in learning.
- Students evaluate their peers' work periodically.
- Information technology (IT) is used well as a tool in some lessons.
- Attendance is high.
- Students' views are valued in the student government meetings.
- Parents hold positive views of the school.

What The School Needs To Improve

- Further develop the use of data to show clearly individual students' growth over the years.
- Combine all sources of data together, such as attainment from year to year about individual and groups of students, into a manageable form that can be used to identify further worthwhile interventions to accelerate students' progress.
- Develop the qualities of students' writing in all subjects to accelerate their progress.
- Develop the role of the leadership team so that it has a greater influence in the school's life.

Mott Hall II Middle School

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This school is currently operating at a proficient level and is developing well.

Mott Hall II provides a good education for its students. Its use of data is proficient.

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 is developing and at present is at a proficient level.

Mott Hall II is a successful school. The school uses data proficiently to identify strengths and weaknesses in all aspects of students' work. As a result of this attention to detail and teachers' advanced understanding of how to provide a good education, students' standards of work exceed those of similar and all schools in New York City in English language arts, mathematics and science. Standards have steadily risen since 2003.

Students are showing some good growth, though the school finds this aspect more difficult to interpret because data exists in discrete sets and there is no unified system to compare the information easily. The process is not yet formalized into a structure that can be easily replicated and built upon next year. Data from a computer-based system could be more easily shared, refined and replicated. It would also be easier to identify trends, question patterns, and determine gaps and successes. There is no complacency however; the school has identified several relevant areas to improve, such as students' writing standards in all subjects to accelerate their progress in all subjects.

Teachers use a wide variety of data to keep a check on individual students' standards of work and the progress they make. The school monitors student progress and performance, for example, through tests, quizzes and other assignments. Students know clearly what is expected of them and how to improve. The school has been able to improve the quality of instruction and develop the curriculum to better meet the needs of students because of the information it keeps at student level is plentiful. Written progress reports and report cards, for example, are used to record individual progress. This regular feedback helps students know what they have to do next to improve and tells them where they stand in comparison with their peers.

Teachers collect data proficiently through discussion with students about their progress. This system gives teachers a good understanding of individual student's progress and how well they are doing in areas that are not formally tested. For the few students who are 'at risk' with English as a second language or who are special education students, the programs support them well and many make good progress. Good attention is paid to attendance data. Attendance is high because lessons are interesting, students like school and the Dean keeps a close watch on registers.

Mott Hall II Middle School

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 is proficient.

The notion of improving students' progress drives the activity of all members of the school community. For example, the school has a useful Academic Intervention Program book that involves students new to the school in identifying their strengths and weaknesses. The book contains references to where students can find advice about how to improve their grades and how they can keep a record of their scores. As soon as students arrive in school, they begin to engage in and take responsibility for their own progress. Students are therefore advised well at an early stage.

The school gives proficient attention to all aspects of data overall, including student, classroom, grade level and by academic subject. Attendance records, tests, quiz scores and homework assignment grades are all used as indicators of whether students are fully engaged in their work. Most targets are measurable over time, and students have a good idea of what they need to do to graduate. Students enjoy the idea that they are preparing for college. The school rightly wishes to improve students' writing in all subjects. Data from marking students' work has revealed this element as the one most likely to accelerate students' progress further in all subjects.

Teachers know their students well at an individual level. There is a large amount of data about individuals. As a result, the school has introduced accelerated classes for the more able students, where for example, students are working on 9th grade mathematics work in 8th grade. What teachers are less clear about is whether different ethnic groups perform as well as each other and whether a change of organization could further accelerate progress, such as Black boys, who are currently underachieving as a group.

Parents and students confirm that the school has high expectations of students. Parents are regularly invited to hear about their child's academic progress at conferences; they are pleased with the level of contact with the school. The exchange of information at meetings and on report cards, which are sent home regularly, is helpful. This system accelerates students' progress because coordinated checks are being made to ensure that students improve. The information shared helps in setting reasonably challenging goals for students and evaluating students' improvement plans.

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

This area is proficient.

The school's motto is, "Today's Scholars, Tomorrow's Leaders", and the school is working effectively to achieve its aim. Much has been done to ensure that teaching and learning, the curriculum and efficient financial planning have a positive effect on students' progress.

The school has adapted the curriculum so that it is taught at a speed that accelerates the progress of the more able students yet meets the needs of special education

Mott Hall II Middle School

students. Teachers give students responsibility. Students prepared very good science projects about a huge range of subjects for all students to see, such as, "Is there life on Europa?" and "What effect does growing plants in aspirin have?" At the science fair, students demonstrated a good grasp of the scientific method of inquiry. The interesting curriculum keeps students well engaged in school life. This is an instance where teachers' natural instinct to provide a good curriculum is not influenced by the drive to respond to or to create numerical data. Nevertheless, many students have made good progress in science as a result of their work. Teachers have responded well to the need to encourage good writing in science.

Much effort has gone into making staffing and resource decisions work for the benefit of students. An appropriate variety of data is used to identify issues for improvement. For example, the principal has carried out a helpful program of teaching observations. Teachers receive feedback and have opportunities to improve what they do as a result. The school has accurately identified, for example, the need for information technology to be integrated into lessons, to accelerate students' progress. In one lesson observed, lap top computers were used very effectively by students to record their presentations in humanities, and students competently e-mailed information to their teacher. As a result of this work new students to grade 6 next year should find their first few weeks in school next year are easier to cope with. Students have analyzed carefully what new students need, such as maps of the building and have developed instructions and information.

Aspects of teaching are well-developed. For example, teachers often exhibit considerable expertise. Lessons are interesting and teachers have a good knowledge of students' rate of day to day progress. Teachers engage students effectively by, for example, getting students to evaluate the work of their peers successfully. Student relationships, behavior and attitudes to work are generally well-developed. Students engage in their work and understand how doing well at school will help them in the future. Procedures to improve attendance are rigorous and data is used well to identify individual student attendance patterns. Students are advised well by their teachers and consequently they have positive views about the school. Teachers listen to the points of view of the student government. Each student has an adult to whom they can turn to.

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 is already proficient and is developing well.

This is a good school. The principal and the staff have high expectations of the students in terms of teamwork and collaboration and there is a positive culture. The school is led well by the respected principal and there is a shared view about its mission. The principal has a clear vision; based on the work of other Mott Hall schools, which is to accelerate students' progress and, for example, to encourage decision making skills in students. The leadership is well focused on improvement and on building the capacity to continue changes to realize this vision. Decisions are shared effectively in teams and there is no complacency. Teachers collaborate to ensure that all students focus on realizing much of their potential. The school runs smoothly under the close scrutiny of the principal and Dean.

Mott Hall II Middle School

Many aspects of the leadership and management of the school are well-developed. The principal uses the appointment of new staff and training of existing staff to help improve the school and accelerate students' progress. Professional development of teachers is carefully considered. The program meets teachers' needs so that they can meet the needs of their students more effectively.

The school's process of self-evaluation has led to an accurate evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses; therefore the school's capacity to improve is good. The school responds to its self-evaluations positively. For example, teachers revise plans and methods to improve students' performance and progress, particularly at this time of year when students are revising for tests.

The School Leadership Team of staff and parents has limited effectiveness and is an area to improve. There are occasions when the work of the team has led to beneficial change, but too often discussion is not productive. Agendas need to focus on all the issues the school faces so that the School Leadership Team has a positive influence on all the school does.

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 is proficient.

The school has some good procedures for evaluating students' progress and for identifying strengths, as well as weaknesses. The school is held in "Good Standing" in its Annual Report from New York Education Department. Diagnostic tests and assessments play a part in the process. Regular assessments, discussions about them between teachers and students and between teachers contribute positively to the process of accelerating students' progress. Teachers set students appropriate interim goals and all concerned have a clear notion of whether plans are on track to meet the end of year goals.

Teachers make appropriate comparisons of students' performances in classes. The principal and staff regularly look for ways of helping individual students better. Teachers diagnose strengths and weaknesses, and if necessary make changes to lesson planning. Quite recently the teaching of mathematics was adapted in response to trends observed in the teaching. The staff discusses the curriculum map regularly.

There is coherence in what the school plans and achieves. Several times a year, students' performances are reviewed. Any student target that is in danger of not being met is discussed, and redefined if necessary. The school provides an appropriate program of extra time at the end of the school day to respond to any students' lack of progress. The principal's annual review feeds into the overall process. The principal has targets to reach which match the targets for the school.

Mott Hall II Middle School

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	

Mott Hall II Middle School

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

Mott Hall II Middle School

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	
5.4 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	
5.5 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	