



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Public School 043
160 Beach 29 Street
Queens
NY 11691**

Principal: John Quattrochi

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Reviewer: Geof Timms

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 43 is a large school with 1363 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school's population comprises: 67.6% Black students, 27.2% Hispanic, 3.4% Asian and others, and 1.8% White students. The proportion of English language learners is 8.4% and is below the average for City schools. This number is growing as more students join the school due to new housing in the neighborhood. Although the building is large, many rooms are small for the number of pupils in classes and outdoor sports facilities are limited. Approximately 8% of the school population is special education students. The school receives Title 1 funding for a higher proportion of the students than is typically found in other City schools. The average attendance is broadly in line with City schools but slightly below that of similar schools.

PS 43 is an empowerment school. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment Schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The cabinet is very clearly focused on continuous improvement and ensures the school runs smoothly.
- The principal is highly respected by staff, students and parents and is very effective in leading change.
- The school collects a wide and rich range of data from tests, assessments and observations, giving staff a good depth of knowledge about students' achievement.
- The senior leaders and the teachers make very effective use of the available data to make effective adaptations to teaching and the curriculum as necessary.
- The school is accurate in its self-evaluation, and in the setting of appropriate but very challenging goals.
- Students make good progress and achieve well, especially the English language learners and the higher achieving students.
- The professionalism and skill of the teachers and other staff are evident in the high levels of care for the students.
- Staff work together effectively in a range of teams, offering mutual support and sharing good practice wherever possible.
- Professional development is based on identified needs and results in clear improvements to teachers' practice and the achievement of the school's goals.
- The school is effective in seeking and utilizing innovative programs to help students.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop school systems for gathering and monitoring data to identify and analyze differences between achievement of boys and girls.
- Ensure greater consistency in giving students opportunity to assess their own and each other's work throughout the school.
- Improve intervention strategies for special education students so that they make the same good progress as other students.
- Support teachers in providing students with differentiated tasks so that this is consistent practice throughout the school.
- Provide teachers with more opportunities for inter-visitations and opportunities to share good practice in raising student achievement even higher.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

This school works successfully to help students achieve their potential. It is recognized as a rapidly improving school by the State Education Department. The education provided, and standards achieved, have improved greatly since the school opened. Students are at ease with together, respecting each other's views, backgrounds and cultures. In classes, students are polite, attentive, and take a full part in discussions. In some classes, students assess their own and each other's work but this is not consistent across the school. The school is very effective in providing an appropriate education for English language learners, helping them make very good progress. It also provides dual language classes for those who wish to retain their home language or learn a new one. There are very strong links with parents, largely due to the very good work of the parent coordinator and the very enthusiastic parent teacher association president.

The school makes very good use of designated periodic assessment materials, alongside their own systems, to generate data and track students' progress. The way this information is used to create an effective curriculum, and to improve the quality of the teaching, is one of the school's major strengths. However, the systems are not yet developed to analyze differences between boys' and girls' achievements. Teachers are very willing to introduce innovative ideas and programs, but they do not have sufficient opportunities to observe each other and learn from each other. Currently, there is a particular focus on helping middle achieving pupils make better progress and this is already proving successful. In some classes, students are set tasks matched to their prior achievement level, but this is inconsistent at times. The school is now planning to review provision for special education students as their progress, although still good, is below that of other students.

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 very wide range of data from different sources to track performance and progress and compare these against similar schools and the school's own past performance. City and State test data are used very effectively to highlight individual students' achievement and to track their progress from year to year. As a result, the school has a good understanding of the progress students make. This enables teachers to provide appropriate intervention programs where necessary, such as those for English language learners or for higher achieving students.

The school is particularly effective at using data to highlight particular questions that pupils have answered successfully or otherwise. Teachers use this information to change the content of particular classes so that weaknesses are dealt with promptly and good progress is maintained. The school has also developed more complex systems to monitor

students' progress, such as tracking those who are not just at a specific level but distinguishing between students at the top or bottom end of a level. Case studies of individual students show that teachers and other professionals understand how individual progress can change over time and they are able to adjust their strategies accordingly.

Teachers keep their own assessments and useful records, such as those in guided reading, which clearly show how well individual students progress over the year. They are always seeking new and efficient methods to gather data and use it more effectively. The recent introduction of an assessment system using palm top computers for grades K through 2 is proving very useful in the early identification of students who may be falling behind. The school systems for gathering and monitoring data are less well developed to identify and analyze differences between achievement of boys and girls.

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 cabinet and teaching and learning teams collaborate well to set appropriately challenging goals and objectives intended to sustain recent improvements. The steps needed to achieve those goals are shared and teachers use data very effectively when planning students' learning. There are excellent aspects to this work, such as the targeted provision for students who have not achieved the expected levels at the end of a year. This clearly has a major impact on students' attitudes towards school as well as on their achievement. The high expectations evident in the culture of the school are shared effectively with parents and students. In some classes, students have opportunities to assess their own and each others' work, but this is not consistent throughout the school.

Data are shared with parents who are fully involved in deciding the best ways of helping their children to learn. Parents also help to shape the school's overall goals. Information is shared with students so that they know how they are doing and what they need to do next to improve. Data from standardized tests are used effectively by teachers to group pupils in a range of ways, appropriate for the purpose of the class. The use of scale scores provides an extra challenge, especially for those students in the middle range who are successfully supported by specific programs to reach higher levels. Intervention strategies are less effective for special education students. The school has plans to review the provision made for them. Students have individual data portfolios and teachers use these to track and monitor their progress.

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 curriculum is successfully designed to support and enrich the mandatory curriculum. Innovative resources and materials help raise achievement and bring classes to life. Consequently, students are actively engaged with their learning and want to succeed. The growing use of computers and other information technology is beneficial, especially for older students in mathematics. The after school and extended school activities offer a

range of opportunities in sport, art and music. Currently different dance, acting and singing skills are being developed ready for a performance of the musical "Annie." A particular strength is a program aimed at the middle achievers to help them organize and manage their school work, their resources and their learning more effectively. This improves their academic progress.

High priority is also given to students' personal development. Staff know their students well and each student trusts the adults in the school and knows that they care for them. Periodic assessments are used to realign instruction as necessary and lesson plans reflect teachers' knowledge of students' needs. The item by item analysis of test data is used in both English language arts and mathematics to focus the teaching in on areas of concern. This results in clear planning which improves student achievement. In some classes, students are provided with differentiated tasks matched to their prior achievements although this is not consistent throughout the school.

The principal makes staffing and budgeting decisions that are clearly based on data and the needs of different students. Currently, the provision and resources for the special education students are a focus and the school is reviewing whether less external intervention and more inclusion would be beneficial for most of them. Teachers work together very effectively, in grade teams and with the coaches and assistant principals. Recent work to develop teachers' questioning skills has been effective and even the students are now often aware of different question levels and styles. Although the teachers' collection and use of test data is very strong, there are insufficient opportunities for them to develop their skills in analyzing differences between students' achievements.

Attendance is a high priority in the school. The school attendance team meets regularly to discuss overall strategy and individual cases. This helps to stress the importance of good attendance among students and parents. They also deal with issues such the provision for suspended students, punctuality, and late pick-ups.

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 principal is well respected by staff and parents, and by the students who would like to see more of him in classes and around the school. This respect reflects the high levels of care for students. This quality of care is shared by all staff. The very effective teamwork clearly provides the school with the capacity to improve further. Improvements made so far are a reflection of the very hard work put in by all to raise achievement to the current high levels.

There is no room for complacency. All staff are fully focused on raising achievement even further. The principal ensures that any staff hired share the same commitment to raising student achievement. The teachers' use of data is regularly checked. The principal, assistant principals and coaches visit classrooms regularly to review the quality of teaching and learning. They provide effective feedback to help teachers improve through appropriate professional development. Teachers value this feedback and they demonstrate their commitment to the school, and to their own professional development, by giving freely of their time at weekends and in vacations for a range of activities. New teachers receive a good induction to the school and are well mentored and supported.

Professional development reflects the innovative approach evident throughout the school. Programs such as those intended to bring on the middle achievers or to support and challenge the higher achievers are the result of careful research and training by senior staff before implementation. This careful approach is acknowledged as exemplary practice by some of the organizations producing the programs. However, teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to watch each other teach and learn from each other in order to share good practice and raise student achievement. Good partnerships with community-based organizations effectively support students with specific needs.

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.

The end-of-year standardized data is used very effectively to assign students to their next classes, according to both student needs and teachers' strengths. The Comprehensive Education Plan provides a good basis for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and for setting the next year's priorities and goals based on a sharp analysis of data. . The level of detail in many of the school's assessments means that teachers are able to use it to measure students' progress with great precision. For example, teachers carefully monitor those students who, although performing fairly well, are in danger of not achieving their full potential. This diagnostic information is then used to measure the progress of plans and interventions as well as to realign instruction or create appropriate intervention strategies.

The effectiveness of intervention is regularly discussed between grade teams, cabinet and intervention teams. The tracking data enables comparisons between grades, and between classes across grades, where areas for concern are highlighted and swiftly acted upon. The school's long-term goals show yearly increases in English language arts, mathematics and science. The success of flexible intervention at an individual level is clearly evident in, for example, holdover classes where the data is used to help celebrate success in a very positive manner.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 043 (PS 043)	∅	✓	+
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