



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Middle Village School

Public School/Intermediate School 087

**67-54 80 Street
Queens
NY 11379**

Principal: Caryn Michaeli

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Reviewer: Barry King

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Middle Village is a combined elementary and middle school with 652 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. Until five years ago, it admitted students of elementary school age only. Approximately 57% of the students are White, 35% Hispanic, 6% Asian and 2% from Black and from other backgrounds. The proportion of special education students is 21%. Another 17% are identified by the school as needing extra academic support and are placed on special education programs. The great majority of those on special education pathways are taught in collaborative classes with general education students. The proportion learning English is 7%. The main languages spoken other than English are Spanish and Polish. The school receives Title 1 funding but at a level that is below the average for similar and City schools. Attendance is around 92%, which is above the City average.

The current principal has been in post a little over two years. Before her appointment, the school went through a period of instability, with a rapid turnover in the school's leadership.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal leads by example, is very well respected and is the driving force behind the school's improvement.
- The Administration and staff work hard and collaboratively.
- The pastoral care of the students is very good, successfully promoting their personal development and well-being.
- The school has well-developed systems for gathering and collating data on each student, class and grade level.
- Instruction and support are well aligned to the school's large population of students on special education programs.
- Budgeting and staffing decisions support the school's core values and instructional programs very effectively.
- The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, supported by clear schedules.
- Intervention to support students at risk is based upon data and is sensitively adjusted as performance changes.
- The school has an extensive professional development program aligned to the needs of the individual staff.
- Students and parents value the school's nurturing environment and its open-door policy when they have concerns.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on the good practice within the school to improve differentiation and the level of engagement in lessons to raise students' academic achievement.
- Aggregate data on ethnic groups and gender so that their relative performance can be evaluated and remedial action taken where necessary.
- Use data to set measurable goals collaboratively for the whole school, and ensure that all stakeholders are united behind them.
- Ensure that the professional development of the staff is aligned to the overarching goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan as well as their individual needs.
- Where students' performance is weaker, revise instructional programs to raise it.
- As the school moves to its next stage of development, empower all leaders in the school to take a greater responsibility for managing the changes.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school has emerged well from a period of change and difficulty as it extended the grade range while suffering instability in its management. The determined and widely respected leadership of the principal has been the chief catalyst in securing the improvements. As one parent said, 'She has made every issue her business'. Together with a staff of like-minded colleagues whom she recruited and inspired, she has created a strong sense of community within the school. It has an excellent tone and the building is calm and welcoming. Behavior and achievement have improved, and the school has developed rapidly into one that uses data to review progress, set goals and align instruction. There are still some important steps that need to be taken in these areas but the school is well placed to take them. This is because the leadership's evaluation of the school is accurate and so it knows what needs to be improved. The school is now at the stage in its development where leadership tasks can be distributed as a way of supporting the principal in her drive to improve the school and make the changes sustainable.

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

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school collects a wide range of data on the progress of each student from regular and frequent assessments using external and in-house assessment schemes. This is well presented and accessible so that the school's leaders can readily see how each student, class and grade is performing. At the classroom level, good progress has been made in introducing assessment portfolios that contain clear documentary evidence of each student's capabilities. The school generates and records good data on the performance of its special education students and English language learners, which is a key to its success in promoting the performance of these groups, but it does not collate data for ethnic groups. The school has rightly been interested in analyzing the performance of general education students to see whether those in collaborative classes do as well as those in general education classes, and has a clear view that they do. However, it does not document the performance of boys in relation to girls beyond what is in the City report card.

The school has a firm understanding of how well it is performing in relation to similar schools and its own past record. It uses data effectively to compare the performance of individual students against one another and in relation to the goals they are aiming for. It uses the data to hold class and subject teachers accountable for the performance of their classes, and it has a clear understanding of how well students perform in English language arts compared to mathematics. On the basis of this information it has been effective in tackling some pockets of underperformance but the lack of data on ethnic groups and the performance of boys and girls means that any potential underperformance in these areas has not been systematically analyzed or addressed.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The schedule allows staff to work collaboratively to set appropriate, measurable goals for individual students, although the students are not always clear about what they have to do in order to improve, partly because rubrics are not clearly posted in classrooms. The school is particularly good at setting goals for special education students and students at risk, and using data to readjust them as their achievement improves. The individual education plans for students on special education programs indicate specific ways in which students should improve against a timeframe for doing so. As well as learning objectives, students also have goals in the form of activities, such as reading a specific number of books within a certain timeframe. The school has expectations of how well each class and grade should perform, although these are not aggregated into clear, overall targets for the school as a whole against which its success can be measured.

The school has high expectations for the students in many respects, for example in relation to their behavior and the way they work together as a community. High expectations exist also for much of the students’ academic work, for example in literacy and numeracy. However, the school recognizes that expectations are not high enough in certain areas, for example in science across the school and more generally in the middle school. The school regularly communicates to the parents the progress of their children and has an open door policy to listen to what they have to say, which they value. Staff act promptly where there are any concerns, for example about personal welfare or progress in learning.

The school’s Comprehensive Education Plan has three clearly stated and well-judged goals for the current year. However, these goals do not have clear, measurable success criteria against which the school’s progress towards them might be evaluated and they are not known by most parents and staff. However, the stakeholders have a strong sense of the school’s general mission and are united in a sense of common purpose to achieve it.

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

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Under the guidance of the principal, the school has put in place the required curriculum mandates and programs to enrich the students’ experience, notably in music. It has assessed the effectiveness of the curriculum’s implementation. As a result of this, it is aware that changes are needed in some areas of its work to improve the achievement of its students, for example in science and social studies. The teachers are held accountable by senior staff and grade leaders for the performance of their students following the periodic assessments of their progress. They recognize the importance of differentiating instruction to meet the needs of individual students and there are examples of good practice. For example, in a grade 7 lesson on rhyming patterns, students were placed in ability groups, given rhyming patterns of different levels of difficulty and supported at their

levels of activity by the personalized support from the teacher. However, there are pockets of practice where differentiation is less well developed and this, in particular, restricts the performance of the more able students. Classrooms are stimulating places with good displays and students behave well and have good attitudes. They do what is asked of them but it is noticeable in a number of classes that, although they comply with the teachers' instructions, the work is not stimulating enough to challenge and engage them fully.

The budgeting, scheduling and staffing decisions of the school are well aligned to the school's philosophy and the needs of the students as revealed by the data. For example, class sizes are small and individualized programs are well constructed for students at risk. The respect and care that staff show towards their students is a major factor in their enjoyment of school and their sense of trust and security within it. The administration and staff have created a respectful and nurturing environment in which the students can flourish, although the work set for some students does not stretch them as much as it could. The above average attendance is testimony to the students' enjoyment of school and the school has routine procedures for dealing with absence, but does not tackle non-attendance as promptly as it might by first-day home calling.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The arrival of the principal instigated a turnaround in the school. In two years she has built a staff with a culture of collaboration around a core of common values summed up by one teacher as 'It's all about the kids'. Staff have been carefully selected for their skills and commitment. Their confidence in the use of data varies in effectiveness but there is general consent about its importance and the need to become more skilled in its use as a tool for planning instruction. The school is a 'learning community' in that staff are well aware of the need to develop their competences and they do so through an extensive program of professional development, based upon a negotiation of their needs with their managers. The professional development has helped to make the staff as a whole aware of the importance of collecting data to monitor the progress of their students, set clear goals for their achievement and align their instruction to the students' differing needs. However, the program of professional development is not yet fully aligned to the central goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan.

The administration, through formal lesson observations and frequent walkthroughs, are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in classroom practice. As the principal said, 'We want to catch what's going on'. Observations are recorded in ways that make clear what needs to be done to improve and this is communicated to teachers, who also have opportunities for intervisitations so that they learn from each other. The staff are constantly examining and adapting their practice through the many opportunities they have to work collaboratively. This works well in terms of planning for individual students, although not at the whole school level because many staff are not involved in setting, or aware of, the overall goals for the school.

The school runs efficiently on a daily basis as staff and students know clearly the procedures they should follow. It has a range of links with outside bodies which support it in its work and a core of dedicated parents, although the number who are actively involved in the school's life and work is more limited than the school would like.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The good procedures that the school has for collecting and analyzing data on each student means that it has a clear overview of the extent to which each one is progressing towards his or her goals. On the basis of this, goals and instruction are realigned as performance improves. This is seen particularly strongly in the range of interventions for students at risk or on special education programs, where support is sensitively adjusted on the basis of data about each student's progress. As students overcome any learning difficulties the level of support is realigned, for example by switching a student from a collaborative to a general education class, or reducing the degree of push-in and pull-out support. Conversely, where students do not make the progress hoped for, new programs are implemented based on continuing observation of the student's performance. Co-operation with parents, wherever possible, is central to this process. The extent to which instruction is realigned to extend the achievement of the most able is not so well established, although the school is aware of the need to improve differentiation to secure this. The administration keeps a close eye on the performance of each class and grade, but does not generate the data to do the same for each ethnic group and gender.

The leadership of the school monitors developments closely and is acutely aware of the next steps needed, for example improvement in differentiation, and instruction in science. However, the Comprehensive Education Plan does not play a central role in the school's development, as the goals in it are not shared widely, or formally evaluated and adjusted in the light of the school's progress.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Middle Village School (PS/IS 087)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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	