



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Douglaston School

Public School 098

**40 - 20 235 Street
Queens
NY 11363**

Principal: Shelia Huggins

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Reviewer: Richard Woolf

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Douglaston School, Public School 098, is located in the Douglaston area of Queens. It is a kindergarten through grade 5 school with 300 students enrolled. The majority of students live within the Douglaston area. The school population comprises 56.6% White students, 25.0% Asian, 11.5% Black and 6.9% Hispanic. The school has very few English language learners (1.6%) and 8.3% are special education students. The school is not Title 1 eligible. There are two classes per grade, with the exception of grade 5 where there are three, grouped heterogeneously with an average class size of 25. The attendance rate is around 97% which is well above the average for similar and City schools. The school has a full complement of teaching and support staff.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- There is excellent leadership from the principal, which results in high achievement.
- The staff are hard working and dedicated.
- Excellent relationships between staff and students set the standard for good behavior.
- There is an impressive celebration of student work in classrooms and halls.
- The students are engaged in their learning and are aware of what is required of them.

What the school needs to improve

- Analyze a greater range of data to provide the basis for decision-making within the school.
- Make better use of this data to identify higher-achieving students and structure appropriate programs to provide the right level of challenge.
- Use the available data more precisely to set goals for individual students and differentiate work accordingly.
- Involve parents more closely in goal-setting, including formulation and review of the Comprehensive Education Plan.
- Share goals for whole-school improvement with staff so that they understand their contribution to reaching them.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The principal is a constant reminder of what hard work, a passion for education and dedication can achieve. Over the past few years there has been significant progress on all measurable outcomes in every grade from kindergarten through grade 5. The principal is uncompromising in her quest for excellence and has the full support of her staff in aiming high to raise achievement. The support of the staff is much valued and appreciated by the principal in continuously moving the school forward.

Despite the school's success, there is room for further data analysis to inform decision-making at all levels, whether for individual improvement or whole school developments. One challenge is to fine-tune the data to have further impact on the highest-achieving students. There is strong evidence to demonstrate the collaborative nature of team working and very strong teaching throughout all grades.

While some parents are critical of a somewhat narrow curriculum, they would not change the overall success of the school or the dedication and hard work of its staff.

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 is working on building capacity in the use of data. It uses all data from State tests as a basis to plan teaching groups and identify students in need of extra support and guidance. Although the school looks carefully at the scores achieved by individual students within each level, teachers are not yet setting precise goals to improve the performance of these students within levels. Common planning time takes place on a weekly basis within each grade to assist in making the most effective use of the data. Each member of staff has good systems for recording the achievement of their students as assessed every six to eight weeks. For those students displaying particular needs, a system of extra support has been established involving specialist teachers as well as outside agencies and this has helped to raise overall achievement even further.

The achievement of students in this school is very high when compared to similar schools and other City schools. The principal and her staff are placing an increased emphasis on better dissemination and use of data with the aim of even greater improvement in the outcomes over the coming years, especially for the highest achieving students. More work on the data is still required to make specific analysis of ethnic, gender, special education students and English language learners during the coming year.

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 places a great deal of professional trust in her staff to deliver high quality education for all students. She articulates the goals clearly for the whole school and individual grades without stipulating percentage increases. This has had the effect of teachers working collaboratively to ensure progress is significant but realistic and data is informing much of their work. Because of this collaboration, students’ groupings can be altered rapidly to meet individual need.

There is no literacy coach or mathematics staff developer to support staff or students. This has had the effect of making staff work much more collaboratively in order to share expertise. There are comparatively small numbers of special education students but planning for them is as detailed as for those in general education, with very high expectations. The success of this approach has helped to improve the overall achievement. Students are aware of their individual progress and the impact it has in ensuring the continued success of the school and will articulate at length what is expected of them.

Attendance at parents’ meetings to discuss their children’s progress is comparatively high. The recent ‘open week’, during which parents were invited into classrooms to observe their children in class, was well attended. Parents are kept informed on many levels as to the progress of their children, especially relating to individual expectations. Some are also involved in whole-school planning. For example, parents are invited to contribute to overall goal-setting through the Comprehensive Education Plan, and a number would like to pursue a more proactive role in its construction.

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 has a well-developed curriculum in English language arts and mathematics. This has had a significant impact upon an overall increase in test scores. However, in spite of being an exempt school, other areas of the curriculum are less well developed. There are some strengths, such as the physical education program and the work with Project Arts, which enhance opportunities for students’ personal development. There is evidence of technology being used and the development of music teaching in a thematic cross-curricular approach is beginning to impact upon student learning. Teachers are successful in engaging and motivating the students to develop positive attitudes to their learning. Results of these high levels of engagement are clearly demonstrated in outstanding levels of achievement. Data is used to group students, but is not yet fully used to differentiate work to meet the needs of individual students. Despite great success in tests, there are not enough programs to ensure that the highest achievers are fully challenged.

The principal is endeavoring to adapt curriculum programs to best suit the needs of her staff and students to ensure further and continued success. The staff have a large part to

play in curriculum design and are appreciative that the principal listens to their ideas. The data compiled from a range of tests and assessments inform much of their work. Where specific issues arise, professional development is made available whether internally or externally and staff share new-found knowledge with their colleagues.

The budget is carefully managed, and resources and staffing are targeted where there is most need, based on the analysis of data. However, budgetary issues are a limiting factor to the principal's wish to extend the professional development much more widely. She recognizes that more support is needed particularly for those teachers who are new to the school.

Compared to similar schools, attendance rates are well above average and are attributed to a number of factors that include good teaching, parental support and students themselves feeling valued by the entire school community. Staff know their students well, and students are confident that staff will support them if they have difficulties with their work or in their personal lives.

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 sets high standards for herself and is successful in communicating these to others. She is well respected by the staff, students, parents and the wider community. The staff is very stable and highly professional and this is clearly demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. The staff team is carefully built and maintained, with care taken to appoint effective staff when the need arises. The rate of staff absence is very low when compared to similar schools and this acts as another indicator of staff professionalism. The school is usually calm and well ordered, and procedures are followed.

The principal has a detailed knowledge of what is happening in the classroom by the numerous informal observation visits undertaken, in addition to the required formal observations. A great deal of discussion is undertaken as a result of both types of observation. The staff are very appreciative of the principal's support and understanding of curriculum issues which greatly assists them in developing instructional activities and their knowledge of education.

Professional development is seen as a key motivator in the school's drive to improve achievement and opportunities are provided for collaborative working at all grade levels. Professional development is targeted to both whole-school and individual goals and priorities.

Through the professionalism of the entire school community, progress over a number of years has been significant but complacency appears not to be in the school's vocabulary. The principal and staff acknowledge the importance of continuously challenging themselves to meet new goals and further enhance the life opportunities of their students.

The school makes excellent use of outside programs to enhance the overall opportunities of the students with, for example, its links to international musicians and ballroom dancing.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan is formulated as a result of consultation and establishes the school's priorities based upon all available data at the time of completion. Monitoring plays a key role in the planning process. At present, it is not shared widely with staff, so that they are not clear enough about their part in meeting school goals.

Interim assessments in all curriculum areas are undertaken as a means of showing progress to date and plans and targets are revised accordingly. Within this planning process, grade and individual student targets are set and measured toward achieving overall success. The ability of the staff to adapt their instruction, as a result of careful monitoring of the data, is a growing strength.

This is a highly successful school which is using data increasingly effectively to respond to the individual needs of its staff and students.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Douglaston School (PS 098)	∅	✓	+
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