



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Mamie Fay School

Public School 122

**21-21 Ditmars Boulevard
Queens
N Y 11105**

Principal: Mary Kojes

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Reviewer: Stephen Walker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Mamie Fay School (PS 122) is a large elementary and middle school of 1,360 students for grades kindergarten through grade 8. It is located in the Astoria section of North Queens. The school is housed in an impressive and well kept five-story building which was built in 1926. The school population consists of a rich mixture of cultures with 33% White, 30% Asian, 28% Hispanic, 7% Black and 1% American Indian. English language learners comprise 6% of the school population. Over 8% of the students are recent arrivals from the Bangladesh, Dominican Republic and Egypt. Five percent of the school are special education students. Attendance at 95%, is above that of similar schools and higher than the City-wide area. The school is Title 1 eligible with 76% of students qualifying, which is broadly equal to similar schools and above the City average.

PS 122 is a Magnet School for Core Knowledge and select students for the Academy for the gifted in grades 2 through 8. There is a strong emphasis in the school on customizing instruction based on individual needs for student engagement and critical thinking.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school performs well when compared to City and similar schools, with most students demonstrating good progress during their time at the school.
- The principal provides dynamic, reflective and supportive leadership so that parents, staff and students greatly respect her focused vision for the school.
- The positive culture encourages students to behave well and enjoy their time at school.
- Intervention services are well managed and give targeted support for students who require additional help with their work.
- There is a high quality support for talented and gifted students through the Academy program.
- The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis supported by committed teams of teachers and support staff.
- There is a strong emphasis amongst the staff to the nurturing of the academic and personal development of the individual student.
- The majority of teaching is good and promotes effective learning.
- The school has a comprehensive and creative professional development program with an emphasis on improvement in classroom instruction and learning.
- The school is continually evaluating its performance and seeking new ways to improve the learning and progress of the students.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop further the analysis of whole school performance and progress data in order to accelerate the success of all students.
- Develop further assessment procedures across the school in order to measure students' progress more accurately.
- Continue to extend the provision and use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

This is a high performing school with most students making very good progress. There is good tracking of students' progress and teachers are developing their skills in assessing student learning so that marking is more accurate and students' areas of weaknesses are clearly identified. The school provides a very successful program for the academically gifted and talented students as well as effective intervention strategies for students who require additional help with their work. There is a strong emphasis in the school on customizing instruction based on individual needs for student engagement and critical thinking. The majority of teaching is good with a real emphasis on engagement and learning. The principal provides excellent leadership so that her commitment and energy encourages staff to adapt a very positive attitude to their work. Considerable time and money has been allocated to support the professional development of teachers and support staff. The school is continually evaluating its performance and seeking new ways to improve the learning and progress of the 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 proficient.

The school uses assessment data from external testing as well as internal information from the teachers in order to track the progress of individual and groups of students. The percentage of students gaining levels 3 or 4 in English language arts and mathematics is high compared to similar schools. All students in grade 8 gain at least level 3 in the State tests.

Analysis of data informs the principal of any differences between teachers and the performance of their classes. She uses the accountability status reports and the annual school report to track the differences in subject areas and between classes and grades. The school identifies any differences in the performance and progress of students by gender and ethnic groups across the school. However, the school does not formally adopt whole school strategies to address any differences found. Detailed records are kept of the progress of English language learners and special education students in the school.

The school has effective systems for gathering data on student progress and is now actively using this information to inform intervention, instruction and groupings. The school is proactive in supporting students who are performing below the state standard in English language arts and mathematics in the standardized assessments. The school is aware that it can still further interrogate some of the available data as it does not fully compare its results with similar schools across the city. The school identifies the need for teachers to "improve their skills in analyzing performance and progress data within the whole school context". A key focus for the school is to ensure that all students continue to make good progress and add value to previous achievement.

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.

Teachers use assessment data to understand students’ learning and to set challenging goals to accelerate performance. Report cards are analyzed by the principal and assistant principals for each marking period, and any underachievement is discussed with individual teachers. Throughout the year teachers meet regularly with their grade teams to discuss students’ progress. They make good use of the Princeton Review and the Grow Report to analyze areas for development for individual students. The English and mathematics coaches work closely with the grade teams to monitor progress and highlight any underachievement. The school is developing teachers’ skills in assessing student learning so that marking is more accurate and students’ areas of weakness are clearly identified.

Academic intervention programs effectively support students who require additional help with their work. School based teams meet regularly to assess data provided by the teachers on students who are underachieving. The school targets support in small groups for the lower performing students during the extended day program that is specifically aimed at students in grades 3 through 5 who are performing at levels 1 and 2. An additional range of successful interventions for students at risk include the Saturday school. Self-contained classes provide additional support for both special education students and English language learners. There are academically gifted classes in grades 2 through 5 as well as an academy middle school program for selected gifted students in grades 6 through 8. Individual student progress across the ability range is commended through the Honor Roll and Student of the Month awards.

The school works closely with parents who value the work of the school. Communication with the parents is good and this supports student achievement. Parents and caregivers are provided with regular reports that are informative and comprehensible. They are also alerted early if grades are unsatisfactory. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences is excellent. Parents find these conferences very useful and praise the teachers for their work with their children.

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 selects a strong standards driven curriculum that aligns with the mandatory requirements in English language arts, mathematics and science. As a Core Knowledge Magnet School, there is an additional emphasis on global awareness ensuring that social studies are closely linked to other curriculum areas. There are sequential courses of study and assessment which build up students’ knowledge and skills grade by grade. Grade meetings are timetabled on a weekly basis and teachers modify their programs of study and differentiate their instruction in light of the test results. For example, separate classes are arranged for special education students, English language learners and gifted and talented students.

The deployment of teachers and the scheduling of classes are clearly guided by the drive to improve student performance. Teachers are carefully allocated across the grades in order to develop their strengths and provide opportunities for personal growth. Budgeting decisions clearly focus on needs revealed by student data with a view to improving students' performance. For example, additional staff are appointed to support collaborative teaching with special educational students and the 'push in' support in literacy classes. The school invests in the library to provide more appropriate reading books for the wide range of abilities in the school.

The majority of teaching is good and promotes effective learning. There is a real emphasis on developing student engagement and critical thinking. The school is proactive in encouraging teachers to increase their awareness of current research on how students learn in order to improve achievement through students' strengths. The high quality display work provides a stimulating environment for learning. Classroom management is generally good and students are able to demonstrate good levels of concentration and interest. Students respond well to questions and really appreciate teachers who take time to explain the work. There are opportunities to develop further the provision and use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning.

There are good systems of guidance and pupil personnel which support the performance and personal development of students. Attendance of students is over 95% and there are effective procedures for monitoring absences. The positive culture encourages students to behave well and enjoy their time at school.

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 provides dynamic, reflective and supportive leadership so that parents, staff and students greatly respect her focused vision for the school. Her commitment and energy encourage staff to adopt very positive attitudes to their work. She is well supported by the cabinet team who ensure the smooth running of the school.

There is a rigorous selection of staff to make sure that there is an emphasis on improving student performance. Teachers must demonstrate that they have high expectations of students. There is a comprehensive and creative professional development program to encourage improvements in classroom instruction and learning. The school gains very good support as a Teachers' College Project school and is a training ground for student teachers. New teachers receive ongoing support through coaching and mentoring. The mathematics and literacy coaches provide support in the classrooms for all teachers. Regular workshops on curriculum development and instruction allow training to be differentiated to meet the different needs of teachers. Lesson observations are well established in the school and all teachers have a formal observation by the principal or assistant principals with feedback at least once per year. In addition some teachers have developed inter-visitations with their colleagues in order to share good classroom practice. Teams within the school meet regularly to evaluate and modify plans. For example, the grade team meetings provide opportunities for all teachers to discuss student performance and take a full part in evaluation and planning. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis supported by committed teams of teachers and support staff. Parents comment that 'good organization takes away any worries about the size of the school'. There is a strong

emphasis amongst the staff on nurturing the academic and personal development of the individual student.

The school is well supported by the counsellors and the pupil personnel services. The school gains considerable curriculum enhancement from a number of external bodies including Socrates Sculpture Park and the Queens Council of the Arts. The parent teacher association plays a positive role in the school and groups of parents have successfully gained a number of grants including the 'Puddles Project' to support integrated work in art and science. The breadth of extra curricular provision supports students well and adds considerable enjoyment to their school experience.

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 school is continually evaluating its performance and seeking new ways to improve the learning and progress of the students. The Comprehensive Education Plan contains clear priorities with measurable success criteria. Subject leaders are involved in the writing of the document and the leadership team ensures that school plans are evaluated and revised on an annual basis. The academic intervention team meets on a weekly basis to discuss and modify support programs for underachieving students. The pupil personnel committee uses data to assist in recommendations for student placement in special programs such as Saturday school.

There is a well-defined assessment program throughout the school so that student progress can be monitored and evaluated by the teachers and assistant principals. Students who need extra support are identified and Intervention strategies are quickly implemented. The school acknowledges that there is an opportunity for teachers to analyze in more detail students performance and progress across the classes, grades and school in order to accelerate the success of all students

Evaluation procedures encourage a reflective approach to policies and practice. The school now organizes a more flexible approach of open workshops to meet the different training needs of teachers rather than the more traditional grade training days. The 'push in' arrangements in literacy reflect the need to improve the student performance in literacy. The recent collaborative teaching arrangements in the special education classes further support children who need additional help with their work.

The school is not complacent and realizes that as a successful school it needs to continue to challenge and review its performance. The self-evaluation by the school is accurate and the principal identifies the areas for future development and improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Mamie Fay School (PS 122)	∅	✓	+
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