



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Horace Harding School

Public School 206

61-21 97th Place

Queens

NY 11374

Principal: Anita Prashad

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Reviewer: Mike Doran

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 206 is located in a multi-ethnic community in the Rego Park and Coronal sections of Queens. Its current population of 692 students in grades pre-kindergarten to 5 reflects the cultural diversity of the surrounding neighborhood, with the largest proportion (34%) from Black families, followed by 22% White, 21% Hispanic and 23% from Asian and other backgrounds. The proportion of English language learners is above that of similar schools, and is increasing. It currently comprises approximately 12% of the student body with predominant home languages being Russian, Spanish, Hindi and a number of African languages. There is a much higher and increasing proportion of students who are newly arrived in the country than that of City-wide and similar schools. The proportion of special education students has increased to 17% and is much higher than that of City and similar schools. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school has a very clear commitment to enabling students to reach high standards, and has been recognized as a High Performing/Gap Closing School by the State University of New York. The school has built upon its former status as a magnet school for mathematics and applied learning to develop a distinctive curriculum that is thematic and multi-disciplinary, and one that promotes critical thinking through problem-solving as well as an understanding of environmental issues.

Attendance is broadly in line with City-wide and similar school averages.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides outstanding leadership through her openness and accessibility, her clarity of vision and direction, her hands-on approach and the creation of a strong climate of mutual trust with and between staff and parents.
- Students' progress is very good, and the school achieves test results that have risen steadily and are above the average for City-wide and similar schools.
- The principal is supported by a highly effective and committed Instructional cabinet with whom she shares leadership responsibility.
- The school builds very strong working partnerships with parents, who in turn hold the school in high regard.
- Students develop confidence, self-esteem, and an enjoyment of learning because each one is respected by staff and valued as an individual.
- High expectations, shared with students and parents, and underpinned by the effective use of performance data, drive the work of the school and lead to high levels of achievement.
- The school creates a calm, orderly and safe environment which in turn promotes very good behavior and attitudes to learning.
- Staff support for one another is outstanding and central to the good teaching to be seen throughout the school, and to an enthusiasm for shared professional development.
- The school has built upon its former Magnet status for mathematics and applied learning to develop a distinctive curriculum that is thematic and multi-disciplinary, and promotes critical thinking through problem-solving, and is concerned with environmental issues.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school, underpinned by the effective gathering and use of performance data, lead to continuous improvement planning and professional development at both classroom and whole-school level.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the curriculum and adapt instructional programs to make more effective provision for the highest-achieving students.
- Further develop the use of information technology to support teaching and learning in the classroom, and the collaborative working between the administration and staff.
- Extend the use of explicit learning plans to all students, to provide the basis for the systematic monitoring of students' progress.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

In the three years since her appointment, the principal has been successful in creating a strong climate where there is mutual trust and respect between the administration, staff, students and parents. The building is a place where staff enjoy coming to work, where students want to learn, and where teachers constantly reflect on their practice and how to more closely align it to the needs of their students to accelerate their learning. The principal knows her students, knows her fellow administrators, and delegates effectively.

The school's emphasis on the effective development and use of internal qualitative and quantitative data has been key to yearly school improvement. The school's greatest strength lies in the detailed picture it builds up of each of its students with additional learning needs. This enables the teachers to draw upon a comprehensive range of intervention programs matched to individual student needs. These flexible plans are highly successful in raising the self-esteem of its most needy students and in enabling them to accelerate their learning.

Areas for improvement identified in this report are mainly issues that the school has already identified for further work. The school has a strong capacity to carry out further improvements.

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 has established effective systems for collecting and analyzing a wide range of data relating to the performance and progress of individuals and groups of students. This includes information from standardized tests, tests produced by teachers to monitor learning in content areas, and continuous assessment during lessons. This data, together with information about students' personal development, is carefully analyzed by the school's instructional cabinet in collaboration with the teaching staff, to give a detailed picture of the progress of each student and to indicate next steps in learning. Gap analysis is also used to identify and rectify particular weaknesses in the instructional programs and their delivery.

The assessments scored and sometimes designed in school play an important role in informing instructional planning on a continuous basis, and would be further strengthened by providing more opportunities for teachers to share and moderate their approach to scoring. The school has been particularly successful in developing assessments for its special education students and English language learners, and in evaluating the impact of its intervention programs on a regular basis to check the extent to which individual students are benefiting. The school has a clear policy for tracking every student

throughout the year and timely contact is made with parents during each marking period to address any concerns.

The instructional cabinet carefully monitors overall performance ensuring that the achievement of ethnic, gender and other specific student groups are analyzed. The progress of students in each subject area of the curriculum, class by class, grade by grade is scrutinized to ensure that teaching and learning are equally effective for all students. School performance is compared with similar and City-wide schools. Present and past results and the relative performance of each cohort of students are compared as they pass through the school. School summative data indicates steady improvement over the past four years in English language arts, mathematics and science, and the proportion of students achieving levels 3 and 4 in State tests is above that of City-wide and similar schools.

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 very detailed performance data systems described above are well used to ensure that students make good progress. Students are carefully grouped to facilitate interventions informed by the data and the school has established a wide range of effective support strategies for these groups including the Saturday morning English language learners Academy, early morning extended-day programs (with breakfast), cluster groups, special education pull-out/push-in, and collaborative team teaching.

The use of individualized education plans has been highly successful for students with particular additional needs. The school now recognizes that a similar approach for all students using individual learning plans to make their learning goals and associated learning programs more explicit and shared with parents, would provide the basis for more systematic progress monitoring and intervention.

The school has well-established organizational structures that encourage collaborative working at grade and faculty level in developing the curriculum, instructional programs and assessment. The high level of trust that exists between staff means that teachers are not afraid to share reflection on their practice and make improvements.

The literacy and mathematics coaches play a valuable role in ensuring that school’s programs for literacy and mathematics link with learning objectives in other subjects. The two coaches work in close collaboration and their understanding of how their subject responsibilities interrelate makes a significant contribution to the school’s efforts in accelerating each student’s learning.

The school communicates clearly with parents and involves them from the start in their children’s learning. The school provides a wide range of well-attended curriculum events for parents to explain to them the school’s approaches to teaching and related strategies that parents can use to support their child’s learning at home. Parents appreciate the ready access they have to staff and the timeliness with which teachers let them know of any concerns

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.

All teachers are involved in curriculum development by reviewing and evaluating the impact of their teaching. The school has been very successful in developing instructional programs to meet the needs of the majority of its students, but now recognizes that further work is needed to extend the curriculum to better address the needs of the higher-achieving students.

Much teaching is of good quality, and instructional programs require students to be active participants in learning. Collaborative work in pairs and in groups is a feature of most classes, and students respond positively and enjoy these interactions. Some student discussion is of high quality and contributes significantly to their learning. Students feel safe to try out ideas and solutions so that they are able to respond to challenges without fear of 'being wrong'. Information technology is recognized as a powerful learning tool in the classroom, but its potential has not yet been fully realized. The school recognizes that a few teachers require sustained professional development support in order to implement these approaches more fully and consistently.

Students' attitudes to learning and their behavior are very good. Student attendance is monitored closely and proactively pursued. It is broadly in line with City-wide and similar school averages. Students are very appreciative of the openness and approachability of the principal and the staff and feel confident there is someone they could go to if they had a concern. Students are often allocated to particular teachers, to find compatible matches that enable students to make good progress.

Knowledge and data about students drives key decisions about the budget and resources, including staff. The school ensures that curriculum requirements are met and that students are prepared for tests. It is also committed to providing opportunities for the development of broader skills and interests and offers enrichment and extension activities to interest and motivate students. The school has built upon its former Magnet status to develop a distinctive curriculum that is thematic and multi-disciplinary, that promotes critical thinking through problem-solving, and is concerned with environmental issues.

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 school carefully selects staff using a range of criteria and procedures, and involves the instructional cabinet in a rigorous interview process.

Professional development is firmly based on the continuous drive to improve student achievement. Teachers new to the school, including those new to teaching, confirm that the school provides an extremely supportive professional environment for all staff. Discussion and debate in teams is an important part of professional development. The school provides individual planning time for teachers, with carefully scheduled common time for teams to meet. This provides a forum for planning interventions, collaborating on

teaching strategies, and revising decisions in the light of new information. The school is actively looking at ways of making greater use of common planning time.

The school is a very calm and orderly place, and is welcoming to students, parents and visitors. The principal and other school leaders are highly respected, and provide a model not only of their high expectations but also of their care and commitment to students and their families.

There are productive partnerships with outside bodies and community-based services, particularly to assist those students and families needing additional support. Collaborative links have been established with external curriculum projects such as "Reach the World - Makulu" to bring the outside world into the classroom and provide a wide range of learning consolidation and enrichment opportunities.

Formal and informal monitoring and evaluation provide evidence of the effective implementation of strategies and developments. Staff are self-evaluating and regularly reflect upon the impact of their work. The administration observes instructional practice and provides feedback to teachers, which in turn informs planning for professional development overseen by the instructional cabinet.

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.

All areas of the school's work are carefully planned drawing on all available data, and kept under constant review. The way that the analysis and use of data permeates the school's practice is a major strength. Staff at all levels assume responsibility for assessing and analyzing students' progress and for planning, evaluating and revising interventions according to need. Goals set and shared with students are monitored and adjustments are made to lesson planning to address gaps in students knowledge' skills and understanding as they become evident.

Students are also engaged in the review process and have a formal voice in the decision making process through the school council.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is a working document, reviewed as a whole regularly throughout the year, and overseen by the school leadership team. In addition, progress towards goals and elements of the plan are reviewed in team meetings and in the principal's regular discussions with particular teams such as the grade teams. Adjustments are made to whole-school planning as and when necessary.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Horace Harding School (PS 206)	∅	✓	+
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