



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Early Childhood Magnet School of the Arts

Public School 228

**32 – 65 93 Street
Queens
NY 11369**

Principal: Olga Guzman

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Early Childhood Magnet School for the Arts is a small pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade elementary school. There are 365 enrolled students, of whom 79.5% are Hispanic, 12.5% Asian, 5% White and 3% Black. The school is Title 1 funded. There are 15% special education students, including fourteen who receive additional services. Attendance is currently at 95%, which is above the average for city and similar schools.

The school is in the Empowerment Zone, having previously been one of the schools in the forerunner Excel Schools Program. As an Empowerment school it has more flexibility to make key decisions and control of resources for the school's community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting paperwork requirements. It is also a Model School demonstration site for the Teachers' College at Columbia University, the Reading Reform Foundation of New York and the Queens College School of Early Childhood Education.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The effective use of formal and informal data is used to drive instruction.
- The vision and dynamism of the principal takes the school forwards and creates high expectations.
- The commitment of all staff has developed excellent teamwork and collaboration in supporting the education of all students.
- The excellent induction program provides great support to new teachers.
- The commitment to differentiated instruction ensures that individual needs are met.
- The use of funding to employ specialist teachers creates an arts-infused curriculum.
- The whole school building is an exciting and stimulating learning environment.
- Strong links with parents ensures they are full partners in their children's education.
- Very strong community links sees professional from the arts supporting learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the place of science in the curriculum.
- Refine the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

This empowerment school is making effective use of its greater autonomy to develop a curriculum that is rich in arts infusion. A range of data, both formal and informal, is used to monitor individuals and groups as they progress through school. This helps the school to maximize individual potential. As a result it achieves highly, while at the same time providing a nurturing and supportive environment that enriches the lives of its students. Included in the vision of the principal is the desire to create a collaborative school and in this she has been successful – it is a community of learners in which teachers, students and parents are held accountable for achieving success. In part this explains the great commitment shown by the whole school community to making this a school where children flourish and experience positive outcomes, whatever their academic ability.

The building itself is modern and bright, and the excellence of visual display throughout the hallways, communal areas and classrooms creates a stimulating learning environment. The focus on the arts and individual performance is enhanced by the employment of specialist teachers to promote these areas as well as the normal class based teachers.

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.

There is a range of data, both formal and informal (running records, portfolios, conference notes, photographs, unit tests, class assessments), available to teachers to use in this “no excuses” school, which acts as a model within the district. Each teacher in every grade maintains an extensive check list for every student, plotting their emerging skills effectively over time. The stress on noting individual progress allows for an individualized, differentiated curriculum – the importance of which is stressed within the school's mission statement. Teachers are supported by the assessment team, with advice and support on how to use the information provided. As students progress through the school, information is used to assign them to classes, so that a full ability range is maintained in each group. Detailed information on achievement is passed on to the receiving school after the end of 2nd grade.

As well as plotting individual progress, detailed records are kept of the progress made by different groups. The importance of looking for patterns of success or underachievement among the different ethnic and racial groups in the school is appreciated and the assessment team is charged with maintaining and disseminating group as well as individual data. English language learners benefit from dual language education, closely monitored and supported through innovative programs, such as English language learning through the arts. Special education students are welcomed, their progress carefully monitored and individual education plan goals amended in the light of progress with a view

to removing the plan wherever possible, returning the student to a general education program. The importance of using data to identify and monitor any identified groups is an effective feature and the range of binders is a testimony to the thoroughness of the data gathering. The school works closely with others, comparing performance and progress, and supporting collaborative professional development.

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.

School wide performance and trends are a focus for cabinet, while the assessment team meets weekly reviewing data and giving advice and support to teachers, enabling them to maximize the progress of students in their classes. Teachers meet in grade teams formally and informally on a very regular basis under the leadership of a grade leader, who is a member of the cabinet. In addition, faculty conferences and collaborative planning sessions review data, create balanced groups and plan data driven instruction. Parents are very much a part of the collaborative framework and both they and the students are involved in ECLAS planning sessions that are run by the teachers. From first grade, parents are given a hundred key words that they are expected to help their children master and there is a belief that parents have to be fully involved in this learning partnership.

There are very clear goals for the whole school, for each grade and for every student. There is a particular focus on those in greatest need of improvement, for example the academic intervention services team reviews data to create groups, structures and goals for after school programs. Spanish speakers can be supported through dual language classes, taught in Spanish one day, English the next. Students at risk of hold-over are given new programs to avoid continuing failure and as a consequence only one student was held-over last year. The vast majority of students are at or above grade level, responding positively to the high expectations of the school. Consequently, many special education students are able to shed their individual education plans, joining the general education program.

The need to get the very best performance from every single student is at the heart of the mission of the school. The team effort involving administration, teachers, parents and the students themselves is focused on supporting this.

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 work of the school is based firmly on data, showing high expectations of students. It goes well beyond the basic requirements of the mandated curriculum through its focus on the arts and performance. However, there is an acceptance that development work now underway in science will need to be taken further if quality is to match that of other areas. The more effective use of technology will also further enhance teaching and learning. Documentation on achievement, for example the percentages reaching the benchmarks for the different levels, is given to teachers. Every student is the subject of an assessment

notebook and after training and support teachers write up their evidence of progress. All teachers must show this providing the basis for differentiated instruction, addressing individual need and maximizing progress. The gifted program sees facilitators going into classes providing individual challenge. At the same time, special education students are often able to shed their individual plans, even when needing continuing support, such as speech or occupational therapy. English language learners' programs are differentiated by ability and language proficiency to ensure full challenge. Groups and schedules reflect a careful analysis of need.

Careful monitoring informs budgetary decisions. For example, structured reading and writing time showed a need for vocabulary development and money was set aside to meet this specific need. Staff are selected ensuring that they share the clear vision of the school, but are also effective classroom practitioners, prepared to develop their professional skills. The result is that students gain excitement and challenge from school, where they become confident and creative learners with a strong self-belief.

Attendance, at 95%, is above the average for the city. Students enjoy school and the partnership enjoyed with the majority of parents ensures there is little need to activate the services of the attendance committee.

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.

Staff are selected for their belief in the high ideals of the school. A commitment of at least three years is anticipated. Teachers of a high caliber are attracted and show developing expertise in utilizing data to plan improved performance and progress. New teachers get excellent additional support, while all teachers are expected to undertake focused professional development based on identified individual and whole school needs. Each teacher has clear objectives set at the start of the year, which are evaluated at the end in a supportive way. These promote individual development as well as meeting whole school needs.

The use of data supports good practice and teachers are increasingly adept in using it effectively. At its heart, the school seeks to enable every individual student to maximize the talents they have, and to produce confident and assured learners. The principal has produced a training manual which provides excellent guidance for new teachers in helping them work in collaborative partnerships with colleagues, parents and students themselves to achieve this.

Teacher self-assessment, the principal's daily classroom observations and learning walks are among the powerful tools in strengthening collaborative professionalism. While the principal is at the heart of the success of the school and is much respected, she has created systems and a professional team that could continue to take the school forward in her absence, with the school running very smoothly. For example, teachers take on individual responsibility for different curriculum areas, maintaining binders for use by all other staff. Teachers also work in highly effective teams, having the confidence to evaluate each other's work in a spirit of collaborative professionalism.

A range of external development and support helps promote the goals of the school. For example, "Music of the Americas" supports performance. Parents and friends of the school act as learning leaders, while students from the junior high act as learning buddies.

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 a focused, living document that provides clear goals for the school. It is developed over a two year period with the effective involvement of the school leadership team. It seeks to tie identified needs to new goals, a good example being the planning to create a dual language collaborative team teaching class next September. From this the progress towards meeting identified priorities can be measured and judged, and each plan's interim and final outcome drives successive phases of goal setting.

Every student has individual goals as part of the differentiated teaching. The ECLAS test results from the end of the previous school year are with teachers when they pick up new groups in September, providing benchmarks against which progress can be measured. Class teachers, academic intervention teachers and service providers analyze class and individual student data to assess, revise and refine short and long term goals. If it is clear that an approach is not working for an individual it will be changed. High student achievement when measured from the initial baseline is evidence of successful strategies and a flexibility in meeting identified needs, even when these are changing over time. The work undertaken for the case study element of the review will now form the basis of a new element of individual analysis, further strengthening the already impressive knowledge of individual students and their needs.

Diagnostic measurement of progress emerges from data analysis undertaken school wide, as well as at grade and class level. Information is shared throughout the year at cabinet meetings, the school leadership team and at the parent teacher association. The wealth of information enables effective amendments to plans and goals to be introduced if necessary. Information relating to individuals, as well to the performance of groups of students and whole classes is used effectively and is a tool for identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Early Childhood Magnet School for the Arts (PS228)	∅	✓	+
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