



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

New Horizons Middle School

Middle School 442

**317 Hoyt Street
Brooklyn
NY 11231**

Principal: Mary Lou Aranyos

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Lead Reviewer: Martyn Groucutt

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

New Horizons is a middle school with 232 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 45% Black, 47% Hispanic, 7% White, and 1% other students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 42% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 90%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 68% eligibility.

The high number of special education students results in the school operating a collaborative team teaching model.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and her leadership team share a clear vision for the continuing development of the school.
- All teachers are committed to providing instruction that is interesting and compelling within a positive, safe and very inclusive environment.
- The leadership makes very effective professional development decisions that motivate teachers and supports whole school improvements.
- Teachers' frequent intervisitation creates a collegial atmosphere, and an open and reflective professional environment.
- Teachers constantly gather data, tracking progress and achievement from an initial baseline on entry
- Teachers meet weekly in very effective grade and subject teams where they work collaboratively to maximize achievement across the school.
- The school has created an environment of mutual trust and respect between staff and students that maximizes academic progress.
- Teachers value the frequent classroom observations because they provide regular feedback, professional support and dialogue with leaders.
- The school's ability to utilize emerging data over the year creates flexibility in instruction that enables them to meet the majority of individual needs effectively.
- The school and parents work together as a partnership, providing each other with information that helps to maximize student achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the use of data to look at differences in achievement between different groups of students.
- Ensure that all teachers utilize the available data fully to ensure that differentiated instruction addresses the needs of the highest achieving students in full.
- Develop specialist facilities for the study of science to support a broad and balanced curriculum.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

New Horizons is a reflective school that constantly collects data on the achievement of its students. It remains committed to its founding vision of providing effective collaborative team teaching in classes where students of all abilities are educated side by side. Everyone in the school shows commitment to providing compelling instruction that supports students to reach their full potential within an inclusive setting, though there is the opportunity to provide greater challenge for the highest achievers. While there is a clear focus on the mandated curriculum, the provision of specialist facilities for art, music and science adds breadth. However, science facilities do not include a fully equipped laboratory, which diminishes the impact of the subject.

There is a tangible feeling of collegiality in the school and teachers work together closely, frequently visiting each other's rooms, meeting in grade or subject teams and supporting each other through using their expertise for professional development. It is also evident in the very effective paired teaching that goes on in each grade class. The school works very hard to promote effective links with parents, who appreciate the way in which the leadership and individual teachers seek to involve them directly in matters pertaining to the education of their children. While the school uses data very effectively to promote individual achievement, it does not focus as closely on examining the performance of different groups, such as students from differing ethnic origins, or boys and girls.

Since the last Quality Review, the school has addressed the issues raised. The appointment of new cabinet members who show clear ability in implementing data driven decisions has supported this process. This has complemented the effective skills already shown by the school leadership, enabling it to meet the challenges set out in last year's review. The inquiry team is developing very effective practice and has used data to refine its target group. As a result, outcomes are measured effectively, and the lessons learned are being applied to the wider challenges of maximizing the achievement of all 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 the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

When students first arrive at New Horizons, their standardized test scores are part of the information on each individual the school gives to class teachers. From this starting point, teachers are adept at adding quantitative data gathered from regular conferencing with students and from the compilation of running records. Teachers also record results from tests and assignments in a data folder that is maintained through the year on each student. Each teacher is given details of where every student is in terms of current achievement and targets, which have clear timescales, for the coming weeks in the form of a student data tracker spreadsheet. Information contained in department's data systems, such as Acuity and ARIS, is gathered effectively, so teachers have a clear picture of individual progress during the year.

Collaborative team teaching is at the heart of the vision of the school. The teachers in these teams track the large numbers of special education students with care so their achievement and progress is recorded effectively. The small numbers of English language learners receive the provision to which they are entitled, though at the moment there is no attempt to analyze the progress of different groups of students systematically to look for any differences in achievement. The school compares itself regularly with similar schools to share and discuss best practice. It is an active member of its local network and hosts visits from other schools interested in the collaborative teaching approach. Effective professional relationships have resulted in good training and support for teachers to enable them to be comfortable with the use of data. Consequently, it is used to good effect throughout the school to inform planning and instruction. The whole school mid-year reflection, when students, teachers and leadership come together in a process that looks in detail at what has been achieved up to that point, illustrates this well.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The Comprehensive Education Plan contains clear goals and timescales, and teachers are involved in developing this through their regular patterns of meetings. The school holds weekly grade and subject meetings, which provide good support for the collaborative style of teaching that is effective in supporting learning. Everyone attends the extended day and a variety of activities allows the school to address a range of needs directly, including those of students whose needs have been a focus.

Because many students enter the school performing below grade expectation the primary focus has been to raise their standards of achievement. As a result, the much smaller group of high achievers has not yet been fully challenged and the level of expectation for these students is insufficiently high. Support for special education students is very good. A focus on the push-in model means that it is not unusual to see the two class teachers supported by the academic intervention services teacher, a paraprofessional and perhaps the speech teacher and one of the coaches in collaborative classes. This allows students

with the greatest needs to receive targeted and effective support and as a result, they make good progress.

The school works hard to develop two-way communications with parents. The parent coordinator holds regular workshops for parents and so there is a real attempt to create a collaboration to support effective learning for the students. A monthly newsletter contains information on the curriculum that has been taught so that parents can supplement this. Teachers build close relationships, illustrated by the way in teachers exchange cell phone numbers with parents so that regular contact is maintained.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The effective core curriculum, ably supported by coaches for English language arts and math and by the academic intervention service teacher, meets requirements and supports personal and social development. Specialist facilities for art, music and science add breadth and students enjoy the opportunity to work in these rooms, adding to their commitment to learning. However, the lack of a well equipped laboratory results in the science work being rather limited in its scope, reducing the overall effectiveness of the curriculum.

The reflective nature of the school is well illustrated in the very effective way in which the inquiry team has used data to refine its identification of its study focus to a small group who are effectively tracked. The application of lessons learned from this group is applied more widely and so is helping the school become more analytical in the way it looks at individual needs. The decision to keep 6th grade students with their homeroom teachers for much of the week has led to positive results. Students develop strong relationships with their teacher and this not only supports more effective learning, but also promotes more mature behavior. Consequently, the school has seen achievement rise in this year group.

The collaborative teaching model, with each classroom containing students with a wide ability range, has seen teachers developing their skills in differentiated instruction. However, currently there is a lack of attention to promoting the progress of the highest achievers and so this small group sometimes finds that rigor is missing from their instruction. Throughout the school, there is an environment of mutual trust and respect and this is helping students to maximize their learning. An interactive link with homes is being developed through a technology package called ‘Helping Inform Parents’, which leads to immediate contact over tardiness or absence, but also supports a wider raft of information that helps involve parents in the life of the school.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

A regular program of classroom observation by the principal and assistant principal is always supported by effective written feedback. Teachers, appreciate this as it supports and develops their good practice. The remaining members of the cabinet also provide

very effective support and this is at the heart of the effective collaboration that is clear throughout the school. This leads to several consequences, not least in the degree to which inter-visitation is the norm. Teachers use their own individual areas of expertise to support effective professional development throughout the school in what is outstanding practice. This is also supported by links with Teacher's College and external consultants when specific needs are identified.

The school's leadership uses data alongside a process of goal setting for individual teachers in order to make strategic professional development decisions. Since there is an expectation that teachers will turnkey what they have learned this is another very well developed element in the life of the school. It means that teachers are enthusiastic about developing their expertise and in following up new initiatives. It brings positive gains for the school, such as the development of very effective skills-based checklists that the school has developed for tracking student achievement in English language arts and math.

Throughout the school the positive behavior model, based on rewards for positive achievement, has created an atmosphere in which effective learning takes place. This is also supported by some very good external partnerships, such as the support from Good Shepherd for the after school program and the Red Hook Initiative, which runs option groups for the extended day.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

All staff regularly discuss and review the clear goals contained in the Comprehensive Education Plan. The mid-year reflection, in which the whole school community has the chance to participate, provides an excellent opportunity to review progress made during the course of the year. This year it gave the opportunity for the school to consider the progress made since its last Quality Review.

Teachers have individual goals, but do not have measurable goals for their students or classes so it is difficult to monitor progress during the year. This means that they lose some of their effectiveness. Curriculum mapping is in place and is seen as a guide not a straightjacket, enabling changes to be made during the course of the year if it proves necessary. The school uses student data trackers effectively as a good source of evidence, leading to all staff being well informed about student progress. Teachers' and school leaders' reflective practice supports this further, supported by the frequent opportunities to meet together formally and informally. This leads to staff making flexible changes to planning and instruction during the course of the year if it is appropriate. As a result, instruction best meets the needs of the students and is responsive to amendments that make it more effective.

Within the collaborative team teaching approach, which is at the heart of the school's philosophy, there is a clear vision for the future that all staff share. Since the development goals are posted on the principal's office door, they are a constant reminder to everyone and help inspire staff to promote the overall effectiveness of what the school seeks to achieve.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: New Horizons Middle School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?			X		
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?					X
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped