



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Early Childhood Magnet School for the Arts

Early Childhood School 228

**32-65 93 Street
Queens
NY 11369**

Principal: Olga Guzman

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Lead Reviewer: Georgie Beasley

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Early Childhood Magnet School for the Arts is an early childhood school with 380 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 3% Black, 85% Hispanic, 2% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 94%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 90% eligibility.

The school has specialized status as a model school for early childhood and for implementing an integrated arts curriculum that focuses on developing students' intellectual and creative growth through the arts.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The nurturing and vibrant learning environment throughout the school builds high level of self-esteem and self-confidence in students and adults and so everyone strives to do their best.
- The principal's passion for early childhood enthuses all adults and students to work effectively as a team to achieve the school's challenging goals.
- The staff team accepts full responsibility for every student's learning with what is learned in one class being reinforced, consolidated and build upon in all others.
- Parents are very involved in the school's work, know what is expected of them and their children, and value the welcome they receive whenever they contact or come into school.
- The arts make a significant contribution to creating an exciting curriculum that establishes the students' enthusiasm for learning.
- Teachers work collaboratively in numerous teams to plan relevant and interesting activities, and to check how effectively teaching is bringing about learning.
- Extremely positive relationships between adults and students lead mean that students are always ready to try their best to live up to high expectations.
- Leadership focuses well on developing its people and so all staff have good skills, share expertise willingly and reflect on learning and teaching openly and honestly.
- The children know the student mission very well and so gives them pride and a responsibility for their own learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop the staff's and students' skills in the use of technology to support their learning in all subjects.
- Consolidate the school's measurable goals with the students' instructional goals to more objectively monitor whether individuals and groups of students are on track to reach the anticipated achievement.
- Ensure writing workshops are always as exciting and well-differentiated as reading workshops.

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 outstanding.

The “little school with a heart” beats strongly through its very nurturing culture set within high aspirations for students’ academic and personal success. The principal’s passion and vision for early childhood education is infectious and ensures that the needs of the students are kept at the center of everyone’s endeavors. All staff have very positive attitudes and work as a cohesive team to make sure that whatever they do, they do together for the benefit of the students’ learning. The learning environment is a celebration of student successes. It particularly reflects their achievements in the school’s rich arts program. Work and achievements are displayed creatively and catch the eye in every hallway and classroom. The school puts equal focus on raising the achievement of every student, intent on moving them all forward from whatever starting and subsequent learning point they reach. Parents are fully involved in this process and know the school has high expectations of them in supporting the high aspirations for their children. Staff constantly challenge themselves and the students to do even more to reach new heights.

Following the previous quality review, the school embraced the areas suggested for improvement and put into place improved staff expertise, resources and instruction for science and technology. It is now poised to further develop the use of technology across the curriculum. The inquiry team constantly analyzes assessment data and from it identifies and monitors the progress of all students who need an added push or support to help them achieve more. Goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan have measures for the students’ successes and effectively guide the school’s monitoring activities. The measures are not yet included on the instructional goals sheets by which to focus staff discussions even more precisely on students’ end-of-year anticipated achievement.

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 outstanding.

The school has an extensive range of assessment processes that focuses on each and every student. Specific and purposeful daily assessments focus equally on the students’ interests, approaches and interactions with learning as well as the knowledge and skills they have acquired. The school uses the data very effectively to build a full and accurate picture of each student’s academic and personal achievements and progress. Further analysis for special education students and English language learners and by ethnic groups, by class and by grade gives the school precise information about curriculum and instructional development needs. It acts on this information quickly. The school has a general view of the achievement of boys and girls and addresses this well through buying

additional resources and planning multi-sensory learning activities, although it does not look at different learning styles of gender groups really deeply to see if it can make a bigger difference. It constantly looks for ways of using data to ensure it meets every student's preferred learning styles in class. Every assessment has a purpose and many are individualized and targeted.

The rigorous analysis of all data enables the school to compare each child's overall annual gains by class and grade, and their ongoing progress in specific subject skills during the year. This results in immediate adjustments to interventions and instruction, and to curriculum maps and pacing calendars for the following year. The school compares its performance with similar schools both locally and nationwide. Close links with receiving schools enables the school to check the student performance in grade 3 tests. This informs subsequent curriculum planning in grade 2. Comprehensive training in how to use a full range of data results in teachers' full and shared accountability for accelerating every student's progress. The information about student achievements and interests drives the work of all staff, and informs all strategic and instructional decisions.

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 outstanding.

The whole school community contributes to agreeing the school's goals as detailed in the Comprehensive Education Plan, including students. The involvement of students so young is impressive. Whole-school goals are measured objectively by student achievement in the range of assessments and when they take State tests in grade 3. Goals are aggregated into curriculum-specific instructional goals for each grade, class and student. Teachers engage the students in assessing their work. They share and review goals with them during regular individual conferences. In addition to the usual reading, writing and math instructional goals, the school developed goals for science and technology in response to last year's quality review. More impressive is the development of goals for health and physical education. This is to ensure that within the limits of the accommodation, students receive daily exercise either in the classroom, in dance lessons or, when weather permits, outdoor physical education. Some students go swimming. Regular progress reports and interim reports share goals and enable parents to help their children with essential knowledge and skills during the year. Some include clearly expressed "I can" statements for core subjects and personal development. The school is looking for ways to expand the "I can" statements to all curriculum areas.

Since the previous review, the school uses the case study format to conduct an in-depth review of every special education student, English language learner and student who teachers feel need some extra help in their personal or academic development. This process identifies quickly each student's needs and subsequent appropriate interventions. All staff work closely together to make sure what is taught in one class or small group is reinforced, consolidated or extended in another. Collaborative team teaching ensures special education students are fully included in regular education classes.

Parents are extremely well involved in the school's work because they feel so welcome and know that all contributions are valued. They like the fact that the care and support of their children come first, but know that the school expects highly of not only their children but of them too. As a result, many parents help in class and on visits, and a very high number attends all school events. These include the numerous arts and class

performances, and parent-teacher meetings and workshops. The parent coordinator finds ways to extend the curriculum by organizing relevant visits at weekends and during school breaks. All communications are in English and Spanish to engage all parents.

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 outstanding.

The school works hard to make sure that the curriculum is as exciting as it can be. Programs are selected and monitored closely through grade meetings to make sure they match the students’ academic needs and their interests. A wide range of project work enables the students to plan and carry out independent research and to publish it in a form that facilitates both their oral and written presentation skills. The purchase of laptops is resulting in greater use of computers to support this research. Teachers are beginning to use SMART boards to present learning in different forms. The vast array of high quality arts experiences highly effectively builds the students’ dance, musical and artistic knowledge, and their presentation and performance skills. The multicultural dance festival is a great favorite of staff, parents and students and successfully raises students’ wider cultural awareness. The value, composer, artist and book of the month interlink so learning in one subject is effectively consolidated in another. Very positive relationships and a strong focus on the students’ personal and academic development raise self-esteem and self-confidence to very high levels. The students feel able to take risks when learning something new, knowing it is acceptable not to get it right first time and that they will be supported until they succeed.

Centers give very good opportunity for students to practice and extend skills at their own level. This is especially so in reading workshops when leap pad enables students to read leveled books independently while freeing up the teachers to work on specific skills and knowledge with targeted individuals and groups. All classes, including dual language classes, have at least two adults and so there are enough adults to support individual and small group learning. While the number of adults in each classroom gives the students good individualized support, in writing and some math workshops, learning is not always so exciting because all of the students are engaged in the same task in the same way. Student recorded work seen in portfolios indicates that this is sometimes the case in science. Some classes schedule more time than others to independent center time outside core curriculum, cluster and Friday enrichment days. Students develop important independent learning skills in those classes when they are given choice as to which centers they will participate. They talk excitedly about Fridays when they learn through a very varied range of centers that match their abilities and interests extremely well. The school has very good systems for checking attendance. Students love school, and only ever stay away when they are too ill to come.

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 outstanding.

The high level of support staff give to each other is impressive. New teachers receive focused mentoring on how to implement the school’s systems and programs and so

embrace very quickly the school's vision and expectations. This results in consistent practice across the school in all aspects of its work and ensures the school day runs extremely smoothly. Students' behavior is exemplary. They rise to the school's high expectations and are rightly proud of their achievements. They accept full responsibility for their learning, supporting each other, asking for help when they get stuck on something or just advice for extending their ideas.

Staff work extremely well together and are constantly looking for ways on how they can make their teaching even more effective and learning even more exciting. All discussions and training activities focus strongly on improving instructional practice to optimize the students' progress. Visits to each other's classrooms, and to other early childhood schools locally and across the United States have built a culture of open and honest reflections on how to ensure highly effective learning. Honest feedback and consequent support from the principal, assistant principal and senior staff nurture this professional and personal development. The collaboration extends to support service specialists who work very closely with teachers to make sure each supports the others' work. Numerous partnerships in the local community enrich the students' learning experiences and build their confidence, self-esteem and skills base. Examples of this are the ambassador's club that teaches students the skills of public speaking and conversing in a range of different situations and the varied range of art specialists who support the creative arts program.

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 outstanding.

The systems for monitoring and reviewing the students' progress towards reaching their instructional goals are robust. A comprehensive system of team meetings ensures the performance and progress of every student is reviewed formally every week. During grade and common planning meetings, teachers measure the effectiveness of programs and instruction against the progress made by individuals and groups of students in learning particular knowledge or in developing a targeted skill or concept. Adjustments are made to planning immediately a deficiency is noted or when they think the students are capable of doing even harder work. As a result, all students are constantly moved forward from whatever point they have reached. Currently, the measures contained within the school goals are not collated onto the grade and class instructional goals sheets. As a result, there is no direct reminder of the students' anticipated end-of-year achievement against which to check whether the progress should be accelerated even more.

The school reviews the progress of special education students and English language learners particularly well to evaluate the effectiveness of its work and to decide where it can improve. For example, the school is aware that while English language learners make good progress in acquiring key speaking skills, their achievement as a group is lower than other students in school. In order to accelerate progress and enable them to close the gap, the inquiry team has adopted this group for their research project. Goals focus on the need to improve their reading comprehension and writing content. Everyday in one meeting or another, staff discuss the ongoing needs of this group, with particular reference to how the curriculum and teachers are developing essential vocabulary through reading and writing workshops and integrated activities.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Early Childhood Magnet School for the Arts	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 student's 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