



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Winchester School

Public School 018

86-35 235th Court

Queens

NY 11427

Principal: Kathleen Peknic

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Reviewer: Cherry Jackson

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS.18 is located in eastern Queens and serves 462 students from Kindergarten through to Grade 5. It has a self-contained gifted program in grades 1-5 which takes students identified in nearby schools. Currently, 25% of students are eligible for Title 1 funding, which is well below average for the City. Close to 60% students are Asian, almost 20% are White, and there are smaller groups of Black and Hispanic students. The proportion recently arrived in the US is a little higher than in the City generally and last year almost 7% of students were classified as English language learners. Only 4% of students were identified as requiring special education.

Attendance, which was 96.7% last year, has been above the average for the City and for similar schools for the past three years. The principal is in her second year at the school and has many initiatives underway. She has no assistant principal.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is justifiably proud of its warm, nurturing environment.
- Mathematics results are higher than those for similar schools and the City average.
- Students have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Teachers generate a good range of written information about progress from their observations of the students.
- Teachers set challenging goals for individual students which are shared with parents.
- Teachers differentiate their lessons so the appropriate support can be given to all students.
- Teachers receive numerous professional development opportunities.
- The principal is a dedicated staff developer who makes careful judgments about staff and curriculum needs and is well respected by staff, parents and students.
- All staff are focused on improving the learning of students.

What the school needs to improve

- The teachers and principal look at test data carefully but are not sufficiently sophisticated at data analysis.
- Data analysis for some groups is not completed and comparisons between grades, subjects, and years within the school are not completed systematically.
- The Comprehensive Education Plan carries no quantifiable targets.
- Teachers are not given sufficient opportunities to improve their professional practice by observing each other teaching.
- Lessons are not always sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of higher achieving students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The parents and students are very happy with their school and most students appreciate what their teachers do for them. The students' test results are usually above those of similar schools.

The leadership and management of the school are good and most of the school's strengths are in the areas which the principal has been prioritizing since her arrival. These include improving the teaching and curriculum. As a result, teaching is effective and the curriculum is well-aligned with academic standards and expectations. The principal knows each teacher well and accurately diagnoses their development needs. She budgets for staff training and cover time and is always seeking more for the teachers.

The principal is well aware that better data and analysis are needed to allow sharper targets to be set for the students and better evaluation of the school's work to be made. She has plans for all this, and for most of the development needs identified by this report.

Meanwhile the school runs smoothly, and classrooms are consistently organized. The teachers collaborate for the sake of students, meeting regularly to discuss how they can accelerate learning.

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 underdeveloped.

The principal is aware of the broad longitudinal patterns of data for individuals and the school. She evaluates relative strengths of the mathematics and English results and knows where the school stands against similar schools. The principal uses her interpretation of data to guide the work of the school, thus supporting the students. Teachers compile their own assessments and record the performance of the students but procedures have not been agreed and are inconsistent.

The school does not have sufficiently clear information about the performance of ethnic groups, nor of its own special classes for gifted students, who are a major part of the school. Some useful comparisons of groups, subjects, grades are made, but these are not completed with sufficient rigor. There is insufficient emphasis on the systematic, year-to-year analysis of data and most staff have not had sufficient training in the use of data.

Staff have a professional attitude towards data and most teachers use the results of assessments to check on the progress of individuals. They also take part in student

conferences and fill in skills checklists for English and mathematics, which provide useful information about progress made by students.

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 proficient.

The Comprehensive Education Plan shows clear intentions for improving student achievement based on test results and teacher assessments, but it carries no quantifiable targets. This makes it difficult for the school to know exactly what it is aiming for or how well it has done at the end of the year.

The use of test data, and, particularly, data from teacher-constructed assessments is having an impact on student progress. Meetings keep everyone informed and staff are motivated to improve teaching and learning for the students. The principal has initiated grade level conferences during which teachers look at individual progress, set goals and plan an appropriate curriculum. These are helping the school to more effectively meet the needs of the students. . The staff working with the Grade 3 students, for example, recently decided that students were not putting enough elaboration in their stories and as a result of this intervention students are now developing that skill effectively.

Support for English language learners and for special education students is effective and is based on the outcomes of regular assessments. Recent test data identified which students had not progressed enough in English and these students are now being monitored. Specialist teachers, classroom teachers and support staff all maintain careful records and goals for most students, but there are no effective procedures to identify students with particular needs, particularly higher achieving students.

The school works successfully, through newsletters and meetings, to provide information for the parents about what the school expects for their children. To provide flexibility, the same meeting is offered twice, at different times, for working parents. Students, too, are aware that the school has high expectations of them and a student stated “the school wants us to have a good education and to succeed in our lives”.

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 mandated curriculum is well taught to the students, as the successful test results show. Lessons in physical education and art provide good opportunities for self expression and are soon to be augmented by dancing lessons. The curriculum engages students, who especially appreciate that their curriculum is designed to value their own culture, and that of others. The development of a new computer skills curriculum is also relevant and appropriate for students.

The principal monitors the work of the school and holds the teachers accountable for meeting student needs. They consistently identify students with learning difficulties, who they teach as a discrete group within some lessons. They do not as regularly provide differentiated work for students who are more able. Time is thoughtfully used, and the ninety minute language arts periods provide good opportunities for detailed investigation of texts and for writing at length.

The principal has clear, well developed strategies and priorities for managing the budget. She uses the maximum she can on staffing, which is well aligned. She keeps classes small and, wherever possible, allows staff to have additional professional development sessions. In the light of a priority given for mathematics instruction, identified in the Comprehensive Education Plan, the principal has supplemented the school's allocation of time from the mathematics coach to give the teachers more support so that further improvements in teaching and learning can be made.

The staff take part in student conferences, maintain records, and take part in regular discussions with senior staff and parents. Students can name many adults they could turn to for help and, as a result, they are secure and happy at school. One said he liked "the way we are taught" and enjoyed the practical activity which follows the teacher exposition. Students generally behave very well, stay on task and work hard. The principal monitors student attendance carefully and is firm with requests for long holidays. She ensures phone calls home on the second day of any questionable absence.

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 proficient.

The students like the smooth running of the school and appreciate the warnings they are given if there is to be a change in routine. The principal, who has selected many of the staff, makes careful choices, and looks rather for positive attitudes and capacity to develop than for specific skills. She knows the strengths of each teacher and takes care to design a detailed professional development program for them. The staff are grateful for her concern for their professionalism.

Professional development for classroom teachers and teachers of the gifted is very well targeted and is provided by The Teachers College. The mathematics coach and the school's computer specialist also provide good training opportunities by working individually with teachers.

The principal rigorously carries out the mandatory observations for new teachers, who appreciate her careful reports. She also visits all the classrooms, observing, supporting and evaluating the effect of training. Her contribution is helping to raise student achievement. However, the teachers would like to observe and work alongside their colleagues so that they could share best practice. Although budgetary constraints currently restrict this, the principal is looking for a way to provide cover for a collaborative teaching program.

The school uses support from other services when it can. For example, the school and the extended day program collaborate well with the latter employing teachers from the school. As a result they are able to extend the same high expectations for students as they do

during the regular day. One teacher is able to work in the program with two English language learners who need extra help. She says the relaxed atmosphere of the program supports them very well and helps them learn more quickly.

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 proficient.

The school evaluates the Comprehensive Education Plan twice a year and its goals are reworked at least once. This has a positive impact on learning as staff are reminded of the main goals that underpin their instruction for that period. In the meantime, grade plans are evaluated weekly in teacher's meetings that have a positive impact on staff development since teachers are encouraged to share techniques that proved successful as well as those that did not work quite so well. Class plans are reviewed daily by teachers, to good effect as teachers develop an even more detailed knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Reviews for English language learners and special education students are carried out regularly and are well supported by test data. Teachers hold many useful informal conversations about individual students' progress and compare the relative success of students. These exercises are exceedingly valuable at many levels and serve staff and students well.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Winchester School (PS 018)	∅	✓	+
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	