



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Mary White Ovington Intermediate School

**Middle School 030
415 Ovington Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11209**

Principal: Danielle DiMango-Maringo

Dates of review: November 1 – 2, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Joy Richardson

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Mary White Ovington is an intermediate school with 334 students from grade 6 through 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 20% Hispanic, 57% White, and 20% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 3% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 93.9%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is leading the school forward rapidly in using data to improve learning.
- The school is quick to identify students who are making insufficient progress, tailoring interventions to the precise needs of individuals and groups.
- A focus on reading comprehension is helping the progress of all students, including English language learners, in all subjects.
- The school makes a strong commitment to the professional development of staff in order to improve instruction.
- There is excellent use of technology, giving all students the use of a laptop computer to facilitate their learning.
- Instruction is purposeful and engages students in active, thoughtful learning.
- The school adapts the curriculum flexibly to maximize learning and broaden opportunities for students.
- The school's strong concern to meet the needs of all students results in a positive climate, good relationships and effective discipline.
- The principal has a clear vision for accelerating the learning of all students and this vision is being shared effectively with the whole community.

What the school needs to improve

- Build the skills of all teachers in using the data provided by the school, and generated by their own assessments, to evaluate progress accurately.
- Ensure that the pinpointing of strengths and weaknesses in students' required learning results in adaptations to instruction, in order to make goals achievable.
- Extend community links and partnerships with outside organizations to harness further support for students' personal and academic growth.

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.

The school has a strong sense of community and pride in its students, making it a place where staff, students and parents feel welcomed and valued. The principal has brought about many changes in the school's culture and her vision and commitment are infectious. New initiatives flourish because they are clearly directed towards improving students' education. The quality of instruction is central to her vision in making sure that the needs of each student are met.

The principal has driven forward the use of data to improve student achievement and this is beginning to have a positive impact. Instruction is being aligned well to the aim of accelerating learning, and the school is effectively developing its capacity to bring this about. The school has ambitious goals for improving achievement through strategic planning, to guide and evaluate the progress being made.

The school has set up an effective inquiry team that is actively engaged, with the principal, in drawing important messages from the statistical data. This is sparking consideration by all the staff about how to accelerate students' progress. The school is sharpening its focus on assessing learning accurately, identifying strengths and weaknesses and adapting instruction for individuals and groups in the light of findings. All this is preparing the way for sustained and purposeful planning about how goals can be reached.

The school has moved forward purposefully since the previous Quality Review in January 2007. In particular it has improved its use of data, focusing sharply on the progress of individuals and groups of 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.

The school has made significant strides recently in using data to show how well students are progressing and where they could do better. Information from standardized tests is analyzed thoroughly, using technology to good effect. The data is sorted in different ways to answer questions about the performance of individuals, groups, classes and grade levels. The school is effective in identifying patterns and trends in students' progress over time. As a result the school now has a very clear picture of students' levels of proficiency, and also of their growth at each grade level over their time in school.

Rigorous interpretation of this data has identified those students at all levels who make less progress than expected over one or more grades. It has also turned the spotlight on the relative performance of different groups of students, raising questions about why some students achieve less well than they might and what can be done about it. In particular, the school has gained insights into the comparative progress of boys and girls, and of students from different ethnic and language groups.

The principal has taken the lead in interrogating and interpreting all the available data. She works with skilled faculty members to present the information in ways that make it readily accessible to staff. The data is then used by the school's inquiry team and instructional team, who work on the process of translating findings into action. Professional development is ongoing for all staff to support them in using the school's data, and in gathering their own.

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.

Building on the school's data analysis, school leaders have formulated some specific goals for improvements in performance by grades and by designated groups of students, in English language arts and also in math. The school is targeting students who it has identified as falling short of expectations, either in their proficiency level or in their progress over time. It is setting ambitious but attainable targets for these students, including an increase of half a level in their proficiency rating in English language arts. To this end, the school is setting out to improve reading comprehension, in all subjects, and this is a shared focus for all teachers. In particular, the school is alert to the needs of the substantial minority of English language learners, mainly Arabic speakers, and this is having a positive impact on their achievement.

The school is working hard to align instruction to the needs identified through the standardized test score results. It is helping teachers to identify key strengths and weaknesses in students' learning, and to map out the next steps needed to make the required progress. Teachers are making growing use of their own assessments for diagnostic purposes, related to the standards, in tandem with the 'soft data' that comes from their knowledge of students. The school's ambitious goals for students have not yet been fully translated into practice on the ground, but staff are increasingly sharing thinking about how best to do this.

The school is working to raise expectations across the school community. It has significantly increased the information given to parents, for example, by giving them pacing calendars to show the expected path of progress. Students comment positively about the way that teachers help them to remedy specific weaknesses in their learning.

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 school readily adapts its core curricular approaches in pursuit of its goals of raising student achievement. It has reviewed its math program, and widened access this year to an integrated algebra course in grade 8. The English language arts program has been refocused to place reading comprehension at the centre, as a means of pursuing improvement in all subjects.

The school seeks to broaden opportunities for students, as seen in a growing program of activities outside the school day. One student commented that the school is “opening our eyes to a lot of diverse areas we can stretch into”. Despite the constraints on space, the school offers an imaginative program of physical education. The school offers an alternating program of art and music. Access to technology is excellent. Each student is supplied with a laptop computer to use at school and at home. These are highly prized and widely used, linking home and school and giving students access to a world of knowledge and opportunity to practice skills and review their learning.

The principal recognizes the quality of instruction as the key to improving learning. Much work has been done to ensure clear objectives for teaching, to anchor teaching and learning to the standards and to open a window for teachers on students’ learning through the use of data.

Teachers hold students’ interest, encouraging them to explain their ideas and talk them through with partners, thus extending their language skills. Practical investigation in science provides for active learning. Testing before new units of work informs students and teachers about the starting point for learning. This is beginning to lead to greater differentiation of instruction in some areas. Students thrive in an atmosphere of mutual respect; appreciating that their teachers will do all they can to help them succeed.

The scheduling of intervention programs is driven by the analysis of data and goals for improvement, for example grouping boys and girls separately where this builds confidence. Budgetary decisions, as reflected in the school’s heavy investment in professional development for teachers, are clearly directed towards improving student progress. The school is very active in promoting good attendance, following up any absence immediately and using data to show how absence damages performance.

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.

The principal regularly and routinely observes classroom teaching. Teachers have many opportunities to see others teach. They are encouraged to plan together and to share thinking about approaches that work and ways of helping individual students. Teachers support each other well. Help is readily sought and generously given, for example, in suggesting suitable resources or reading materials.

Professional development is given a high priority to improve instruction and accelerate learning. The principal has promoted a strong focus on literacy in all subjects, in order to strengthen skills in reading comprehension. Much is being done to guide teachers in the use of data and in developing their own assessments, building on models developed over the past year in mathematics.

The school has built a positive climate of concern for students. The 'Give Me 5' code has been developed to give students clear guidance about suitable behavior. All this has reduced conflict and promoted a cooperative spirit in relationships between faculty and students. As a result, the rate of suspensions is now much lower than it was a year ago. Disciplinary incidents are dealt with effectively to minimize the impact on learning and the school is calm and orderly. The school runs smoothly. Regular meetings keep lines of communication open. Effective and increasing use of technology supports teachers in tasks such as handling data. The principal is very accessible to staff, students and parents and this binds the community together.

The school has become more outward looking in building links with the community and in promoting activities for students beyond the school, for example, through Roadrunners, Kiwanis and the community dance program. It is seeking to build further partnerships with outside entities in order to promote students' academic and personal growth and to gain more support for initiatives such as the development of technology.

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 proficient.

The principal has a clear vision for the school. This is energizing the school community so that it is positively embracing change in pursuit of improvement in students' learning. The school has moved forward rapidly in gathering data so that it now has a clear overview of students' past performance and progress over time. The process has been led by the principal who is now working with the inquiry team and instructional team to help teachers in putting data to use in the course of their instruction. Goals for improving student outcomes are broadly understood across the school community. Work is now in hand to connect these goals up to the means of achieving them. However, there is not yet a fully developed strategic plan for turning goals into actions, within a timeframe and with objective interim indicators of success or for evaluating the outcomes in an orderly fashion.

The faculty is developing the diagnostic use of interim assessments, to increasing effect. In math, the analysis of strengths and weaknesses in students' learning has become established, using tools such as the Princeton Review in the past. The challenge has proved greater in English language arts, but much effort has gone into creating suitable assessments to throw light on students' learning, related to the standards. The school is in a good position to make effective use of the predictive tests that it is now implementing.

The school has a culture of inquiry about what is holding students back, and how barriers to learning can be overcome. It responds rapidly and flexibly when areas of weakness are identified in students' learning. Because the use of data in setting goals and monitoring progress towards them is still fairly new, the school does not yet have an established cycle for reviewing outcomes to drive the next stage of improvement planning.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Mary White Ovington (IS030)	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 demanding, 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?				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?				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		