



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Horace Mann School

Elementary School 090

86-50 109 Street

Queens

NY 11418

Principal: Adrienne Ubertini

Dates of review: January 22 - 24 2008

Lead Reviewer: Anne Evanoff

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Horace Mann is an elementary school with 849 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Black, 58% Hispanic, 3% White, and 31% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 3% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 67% eligibility.

This year, Horace Mann celebrated one hundred years of service to the community. The school used this occasion to further strengthen and reinforce its connection to the community.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision for the school and effectively uses data to strategically plan next steps to accomplish the school's goals.
- The principal and assistant principals consistently gather and generate data and use it to better understand what each students knows.
- The administration consistently analyzes its data in order to clearly identify the students in greatest need of improvement and effectively plan.
- The school effectively engages in a variety of collaborative processes to set rigorous goals and develop plans for reaching these goals.
- The administrative team provides effective instructional leadership and strong support to both new and experienced teachers.
- Students in the upper grades are highly involved in setting goals for improving their learning.
- The school has high expectations for student learning and the children enjoy attending school.
- The school provides a broad and compelling curriculum, including the arts, to successfully extend learning within and outside the school day.
- Parents and students totally respect and trust the principal and the staff and greatly support the vision of the school.
- The school has established positive and effective relationships with a variety of outside agencies and organizations to enrich student learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to build the capacity of staff to use data to inform their teaching strategies and differentiate instruction.
- Share whole school goals with the community and provide more opportunities for parents to help their children improve.
- Develop a schedule to support all teachers in visiting each other's classrooms to replicate exemplary practices.

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.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Students comment that they “love coming to their home away from home,” because teachers are very respectful of them and “make learning fun and exciting”. Parents also support the school’s vision to offer the “best education possible to every student”. Their enthusiasm is created by the high expectations of the school, which challenges children to do their best, and is supported by a stimulating learning environment.

The school is dedicated in its efforts to support the individual child through a rigorous analysis of data to inform instruction. They have effectively disaggregated its data and identified the groups in most need of improvement. The school engages in collaborative processes that promote effective planning and goal setting. The principal provides many opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development both inside and outside the regular school day. However, teachers do not have enough opportunities to observe each other teaching and provide feedback to one another about their teaching. Students are particularly adept at setting goals and conferencing with their teachers to identify next steps. Although many positive steps have been taken in building the capacity of staff to differentiate instruction, these practices are not sufficiently embedded throughout the school. Where students struggle in English language arts and math, special education and academic intervention staff accurately use data to revise plans immediately to address their learning needs. The school has been highly successful in reaching out to parents through special events hosted during the day. They have yet to consistently share whole school goals with parents or involve them as much as they could in helping their children at home.

The school has successfully addressed the recommendations from last year’s review by increasing its parent outreach initiatives, by continuing to explore a variety of ways to enrich the science and social studies curriculum, and by regularly consulting with the student council about the needs of the school. The inquiry team has effectively identified its focus group and is providing key instructional support to build language competency.

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 principal and assistant principals know the children very well. They effectively gather and analyze data from a variety of sources to better understand the trends and patterns in student performance and to measure progress. The principal and the administrative team regularly examine data, both formal and informal tests to track student learning and to closely monitor progress in the core subjects. They also

scrutinize work samples such as reader responses, portfolio tasks, teacher conference notes and strategy sheets in order to get a precise picture of what students can and cannot do. Each classroom teacher is required to maintain a data folio with test results from the Developmental Reading Assessment, Acuity, ECLAS, and other predictive assessments. Teachers use this information effectively to plan lessons that target the development of students' skills and knowledge in the content areas. The school's data team has been highly successful in gathering and updating performance data for special education students and English language learners. The principal has created tracking systems for these students to ensure that individual education plans or language development goals are both addressed and monitored. The school consistently uses data to make comparisons from one year to the next as well as by gender, grade, and ethnicity. It used the proficiency levels from ARIS to effectively identify a special interest group comprised of a number of students who did not make one year's progress on the State English language test. The school continues to provide a variety of workshops and ongoing training to build the staff's capacity to use data effectively.

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 staff are totally dedicated to regularly engaging in collaborative processes to identify rigorous learning goals and develop good plans to support individual student success. Grade teachers meet on a regular basis to effectively identify the student strengths and weaknesses collated from both formal State tests, baseline assessments and informal tests in their data folio binders. They use this data to collaboratively plan lessons that align with individual student learning needs and create "strategy groupings" that reflect "planned individualization". During these sessions, grade teachers pay very close attention to students who have been "flagged" using the data and who need very specific instruction. The progress of these students is tracked with a very high level of scrutiny by administration, coaches, academic intervention teachers, special education resource staff as well as classroom teachers.

A focus for improvement thoroughly pervades all kinds of meetings: cabinet, inquiry, leadership and instructional teams. The school is actively reaching out to parents to become more effective partners in the education of children. The school has not sufficiently shared whole school goals and clarified student learning goals. The school clearly recognizes the need to continue to build the capacity of parents to help their children improve by highlighting the success children experience when home and school work closely together. The school has been very successful in bringing more parents into the school for celebrations of student work and uses these opportunities to reinforce high expectations for 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 uses a balanced literacy program with a workshop approach and Everyday Math as the core curriculum. Because the school is dedicated to providing a broad and compelling curriculum, it is also committed to purchasing additional materials and

resources which enhance units of study. The school effectively instituted “Friday Math Games” to provide more exciting opportunities for children to consolidate their understanding. It also hired a project arts co-teacher who pushes into classrooms and capably works with the classroom teacher to develop language based art tasks. There are a number of interesting programs and opportunities offered to students, both within and outside the regular school day, that enrich learning. Last year, the school initiated the development of a system to strategically plan for individual students who require more enrichment. The school is making very good progress in building the capacity of staff to enrich the curriculum by addressing higher level thinking skills and requiring students to “dig deeper”. Grade teams meet regularly to create curriculum maps and develop a common focus on areas such as writing genre, strategy of the month, and mini-lesson skills. The school uses benchmarks and interim data effectively to drive lesson planning and target student learning needs. Grade three to five teachers, for example, are diligently focussing on the patterns on the item analysis from Acuity and ECLAS results to identify individual trends and form appropriate strategy groups to target instruction. The use of a Palm Pilot has increased the staff’s capacity to interpret data and provide intervention.

The principal and assistant principals hold teachers highly accountable for the progress and learning of their students and for making learning interesting. They effectively provide both verbal and written feedback on a regular basis and follow up to provide additional support. The principal acknowledges that the capacity of staff to differentiate instruction has increased; however, she has also identified a strong commitment to continue to “extend and deepen” this expertise. The school is currently working on supporting teachers even more consistently to use their conference notes to form groups and create “center activities” that precisely align planning with student needs. The school is adept in making strategic budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions. Such planning has resulted in smaller class sizes, more attention to the individual, and the opportunity for teachers to accurately focus on aligning instruction to learning needs. Parents are highly supportive of the school and respect the teachers and administration for their dedication.

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 and assistant principals provide excellent instructional leadership and support for new and experienced teachers. Because they regularly visit classrooms to observe teachers, they have a clear understanding of the staff’s professional development needs. The cabinet regularly meets to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction. There are many Fridays when they hold “Chew and Chat” sessions and model effective teaching strategies and exemplary practices. The professional development committee is actively involved in surveying staff needs and identifying key areas where teachers need support. There is a concentrated whole school focus on building capacity and developing high yield instructional strategies that impact positively on student learning. New teachers are well supported through a mentor program, subject coaches, and the grade lead teacher who are thoroughly dedicated to providing them with specific assistance in using data to plan instruction and in modeling lessons. The school is in the initial stages of scheduling periods whereby more teachers can be involved in interclass visitations.

The school also employs a full time guidance counselor, social worker and family assistant who play a central role in helping to meet the needs of struggling families and students at risk. Parents feel that their children are well supported and that the school operates smoothly because behaviour concerns are promptly and sensitively addressed. Although the school already has established many highly effective partnerships to enhance student learning, they are always seeking to increase those relationships. One exciting outcome from a partnership with Richmond Hill Block has created opportunities for students to use video conferencing equipment to communicate with NASA to deepen their understanding of scientific concepts and principles.

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.

The school has established well defined goals for school improvement and meets regularly, in a variety of forums, to review and revise policies and practices. The principal recognizes that the school's annual goals and interim goals are the driving force behind improvement and serve an important role in helping to measure how successful their efforts have been in students' progress. The cabinet, the school leadership team, and the professional development team are regularly engaged in "taking stock" of how much progress is being made and make adjustments as needed. For example, when the cabinet examined student outcomes from a language interim assessment, they identified that some students were not performing as well as others on non-fiction writing pieces and immediately provided support. Similarly, the administration noticed through an item analysis that increased practice in the skill area of prediction was needed, and immediate steps were taken with staff to address this need.

The school strategically uses periodic assessments to measure the effectiveness of its intervention plans for students and plan next steps. When teachers examined their class data through the Acuity lens, they accurately identified that some students were not able to write an effective "reading response" answer to questions about text. As a result, they set to work to scaffold the writing process for this type of questioning. They re-taught several key lessons and provided ongoing feedback to refine student understanding. Similarly, skills were reinforced through extended school day programs and academic intervention teachers to ensure consistent student success. The school also purchased the Core Knowledge program to enrich student prior knowledge and enhance their language development. The principal has articulated a clear vision for the school and has invited all stakeholders to participate in creating a learning environment that challenges all children to become independent, motivated and successful learners.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Horace Mann 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