



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Douglaston School

Elementary School 98

**40 – 20 235th Street
Douglaston
NY 11363**

Principal: Sheila B Huggins

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Reviewer: Alan Boyle

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Douglaston School is an elementary school with 261 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 9% Hispanic, 60% White and 29% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 8% 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 96%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school sustains high academic standards because teachers continuously compare each student's achievements with past performance.
- All students make good progress because teachers are alert to students at risk of falling behind and provide additional support for them.
- Teachers, students and their parents all share high expectations for students' academic achievement and personal growth.
- Students enjoy learning because the enriched curriculum fully engages them.
- Teachers use information from periodic assessments to revise plans swiftly in order to reach stated goals.
- Students reach high standards because teachers work effectively together to improve their practice by planning together and supporting each other.
- Effective partnerships with outside bodies create valuable opportunities to extend student learning beyond the core curriculum.
- Many Teachers use their own assessment data effectively to review students' progress and plan for the next stage of learning.
- The principal uses careful observations, from a wide range of data, to review progress with plans and take prompt action if necessary.
- The principal and the whole school community share a common concern to maintain high standards while planning for further improvements.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish a system for the centralized collection of student achievement data in order to better analyze differences between ethnic and gender groups.
- Provide differentiated professional development to improve teachers' skills in analyzing student achievement data.
- Develop more differentiated learning activities within the classroom.
- Establish specific, measurable, interim goals for priorities in the school's plan.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed .

The Douglaston School is a school where students enjoy learning and achieve very high standards.

Since the last review, teachers have made giant strides in collecting and analyzing student achievement data. Parents are very pleased with their involvement in reviewing progress and setting future goals for the school. Teachers confirm that they have an important stake in goal setting. They fully understand what is expected and are more than willing to sign up for it. While teachers set precise goals for individual students, some teachers do not differentiate their work in class sufficiently.

There is a wide range of achievement data in each teacher's assessment binder. Many teachers use it effectively to understand how students make progress in each classroom. The school has not yet centralized this data so that it identifies any differences associated with gender or ethnicity across the whole school. While teachers are growing more confident in their use of data, some teachers still need more help.

Teacher quickly spots any student who falls behind in their learning and is able to successfully request additional and expert support. Teachers plan effective interventions on an individual basis. Teachers also sustain high expectations that they share with students and their parents.

A recent initiative to enrich the curriculum is very popular among students and, as a result, they are fully engaged and have positive attitudes towards learning. Partnerships with external organizations create special opportunities for students at this school.

The principal puts a high priority on the quality of learning and she carefully monitors what happens in classrooms. While this leads to some good professional development, the school recognizes that more consistently differentiated professional learning would further develop the staff. Teachers work well together and fully support each other. The school uses reliable analysis of student achievement to measure the impact of plans and interventions. If plans and practices need modification,, changes are implemented swiftly. Everyone connected with the school has a clear view of where it is going but insufficient interim goals make it difficult to monitor closely whole school plans.

The inquiry team is ready to start work. Its first task is to gather key student achievement data from across the whole school in order to identify the group of students that will be the focus of future work.

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 proficient.

Students consistently reach high standards at this school. One of the reasons is the teachers' deep understanding of the work that students need to complete at different levels within each grade. Teachers continuously compare their students' work with past performance of previous students in the grade. They know what students need to do to reach the next level. Consequently, teachers keep their class on track to reach the highest standards.

While the teachers have these strengths in their understanding of student achievement, there is no centralized system to collect achievement data across the school. One of the school's many strengths is the fact that teachers know their students well. Because it is a small school, the principal also has a good understanding of individual students in all classes. However, the school is unable to pick out differences by gender or ethnicity in achievement data across and between grades. For example, in 2007 male and female students made different rates of progress from grade 3 to grade 4 in English language arts and math. At the same time, the pattern for student progress from grade 4 to grade 5 was completely different. The school does not currently investigate the reasons for this so any underlying issues have yet to be identified. While some teachers are able to analyze this kind of data with ease, others lack the necessary skills and confidence.

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.

Another reason why students are so successful is that their teachers are very alert to when a student starts to fall behind with their learning. When this happens, teachers realize that prompt action will reduce the risk of small difficulties escalating into bigger problems. Those students in greatest need of improvement receive very high quality additional support through individual education plans and more personalized learning.

Teachers have very high expectations for each student in their class. Students understand these expectations and teachers share them with their parents. Teachers collaborate well within their grades and share a common approach to planning and assessment. In some cases, the use of formative assessments across the grade is inconsistent. This lack of consistency makes it difficult for teachers to combine student data and set meaningful goals for achievement, in each subject, across the whole grade.

Parents and teachers help the principal to identify priorities for further development in the school. For example, the principal holds grade talks for parents in each grade. These are in addition to the individual conversations that parents have about their own children. During grade talks, the principal engages parents in discussion about curriculum issues. This is a powerful and effective way to involve parents in school improvement.

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.

Students achieve consistent high standards in the core curriculum. They are fully engaged in their learning and they appreciate recent initiatives to enrich the curriculum. Students in grades 4 and 5 have an opportunity to work in a small group on a choice of three options. This recent initiative is very popular among students. Teachers plan to stretch higher achieving students to even higher levels through these smaller group enrichment activities. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this planned initiative.

The enrichment program allows students with special talents outside the core curriculum to excel. In addition, the school understands that more differentiated learning activities in classrooms will stretch all students. However, most teaching is to the whole class. There are insufficient opportunities for students to work at their own pace in the classroom. The school has not yet developed strategies to support teachers in overcoming this.

The school has a tight budget due to its small size. The principal makes very effective use of all the school's resources through her strategic planning. Teachers, students and parents all agree that the school knows its students very well. The school carefully nurtures trust and respect and this is evident in the positive relationships between students and adults.

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 collects reliable data about the quality of learning by using frequent and focused walkthroughs. The focus varies month by month according to a published schedule. For example, in September the focus includes handwriting and use of the computer stations. This helps the principal to identify issues for professional development. While the principal is able to identify areas of instruction that could benefit from professional development, programs have not been developed to address this. For example, the school has not yet developed a differentiated professional development program to help teachers build skills and confidence in data analysis.

Collaboration is a major strength of the school. Teachers work in harmony to plan and improve their practice by sharing strengths across their grade. They also have opportunities to watch and work with teachers in other grades. This improves curriculum continuity and progression in learning. Lead teachers in English language arts, math, science and social studies provide very good support to their colleagues.

There are very effective partnerships with a wide range of outside organizations that promote students' academic and personal development. For example, students in grade 5 work with the American Ballroom Dance Theater. This boosts students' self-esteem. Last year the school team won a trophy, for ballroom dancing, in competition with other schools.

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.

Many aspects of monitoring and evaluation work very well. Teachers compile considerable amounts of achievement data from periodic assessments and they supplement them with their own frequent assessments in class. They use the information well to review students' progress and plan for the next learning stages.

The principal uses careful observations of students' journals and work folders to help her review progress of plans across the school. These lead to informed discussions at grade and faculty conferences about what works and what they need to fix. The school takes immediate action because the faculty is very flexible in their thinking and willing to try something else.

Agreeing priorities for improvement involves the whole school community. Monitoring described above informs the process. Both students and parents have a voice in the evaluation and goal setting. While the Comprehensive Education Plan has clear overall priorities, there are few interim goals to measure at key milestones throughout the year.

The principal reaches out and listens to everyone who has a stake in the school. Her open and collaborative approach brings people together with a shared understanding of the next stage of development.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Douglaston School (PS 098)	△	➤	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	➤	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	➤	✓	+	◇
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 make 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