

Report to: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **20 June 2007**

By: **Chairman of the Contextual Value Added Board**

Title of report: **Contextual Value Added Data**

Purpose of report: **To update the Committee on the work of the Contextual Value Added Board and outline its suggestions for further work in this area**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS: The Committee is recommended to support the suggestions of the Board:**

- 1) Training on contextual value added data should form part of the annual training programme for all members; and**
  - 2) The Education Standards Panel should have a further presentation on how contextual value added data is used by schools and the local authority to set targets, with a view to exploring this issue further.**
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## **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 There are no financial implications.

## **2. Contextual Value Added Board**

2.1 The Contextual Value Added Board consisted of Sarah Maynard (Chairman), Councillor David Elkin, Councillor Kathryn Field, Councillor Sylvia Tidy (for the initial meeting) and Councillor Rosalyn St Pierre. It met on two occasions, 5 February and 1 June 2007.

2.2 The aim of these meetings was for Members to gain an understanding of the concept behind contextual value added data, how it is developed and how it is used by schools and the local authority to evaluate performance

## **3. Contextual Value Added Data**

3.1 A child's educational standard at school can be measured in two ways:

**Attainment** - assessments, such as Key Stage 2 and GCSEs taken at the end of a Key Stage

**Progress** - performance at a certain key stage compared with performance at an earlier key stage (this is known as 'value added')

3.2 Value added data can show what the level of progress would be from one Key Stage to another and establish if a child's progress is as expected, higher than expected, or lower than expected.

3.3 In the past schools were only measured against their attainment results. More weight is now given to progress and Ofsted views it as a key measure of performance of

a school. This can mean that a school which has poor progress is likely to go into an Ofsted category.

3.4 Contextual value added data takes the value added data one step further. It takes into account those characteristics, beyond the control of the school that can have an impact on a child's progress, such as gender; social setting; age, ethnicity, whether English is an additional language and whether a child has special educational needs or is in care. This means that it is possible to clearly identify the progress of a child that has been due to the influence of the school.

3.5 Fischer Family Trust is an independent organisation that has developed its own contextual value added data process. East Sussex County Council, along with many other county councils, purchases this data and uses it for the evaluation of past performance and to set future targets for schools.

3.6 The Board noted that the way in which contextual value added data is used to set targets at a school and county level means that the targets can be ambitious. Whilst recognising the need to set stretching targets the Board was concerned that setting ambitious, and unachievable targets could have a negative impact on schools and undermine the whole target setting process.

3.7 The Board concluded that:

- 1) Training on contextual value added data should form part of the annual training programme for all members; and
- 2) Given the concerns raised in 3.6, the Education Standards Panel should have a further presentation on how contextual value added data is used by schools and the local authority to set targets, with a view to exploring this issue further.

Sarah Maynard  
Chairman of Contextual Value Added Board

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Local members: All

Background documents: None