

*Use of Value-Added in English Schools*

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Value added indicators are now a central part of school accountability in England and value added information is routinely used in school improvement, both at national and local level. This paper describes the value added models that are being used in the academic year 2007-08 by schools, parents, school inspectors and other professionals in local and national government. It updates information provided for the OECD Project on the Development of Value-Added Models in Education Systems (Ray, 2006).

The paper outlines the development of value-added models in England over the last ten years, following the introduction of national testing at ages 7, 11 and 14 in the 1990s. It describes the current “contextual” value added models in detail, looking briefly at the mathematical specification of the multilevel models, and discussing in depth the practical choice of explanatory attainment and contextual variables. An important feature is the issue of model complexity and the trade-off between increasing technical sophistication and the need for schools and Local Authorities to be able to understand and engage with the models.

The paper also describes various uses of the value-added models: in the RAISEonline system to support schools in their self-evaluation and development planning, and to inform external inspection (including examples of the presentation of value-added measures in RAISEonline); in the published school and college achievement and attainment tables; and other uses such as improving understanding of attainment gaps at national level, by using the model coefficients to describe the relative importance and interrelationships of factors which impact on pupils’ progress.