

## A Parents' Guide to CVA - Contextual Value Added

Harrow Way has created this guide to help parents understand the significance of CVA when comparing schools and to gain a more accurate insight into CVA as a school performance indicator in addition to GCSE results and Ofsted reports.

Good GCSE results do not necessarily equate to a school where there is excellent teaching and learning throughout. One way to delve beneath these results and evaluate the quality of a school's **teaching and learning** is to examine its contextual value added (CVA) rating, published annually by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

In January 2010 Harrow Way was ranked 12th out of the 71 secondary schools in Hampshire County Council's CVA table.

### What exactly is CVA?

Contextual value added (**CVA**) is a measure of the **progress** students make at a school from when they join aged 11 until they leave aged 16. CVA takes into account:

- the contribution a school makes to a student's progress, plus
- a number of factors which can also affect a child's performance but are outside a school's control, such as gender, ethnicity and family circumstances.

### Why is it important?

When comparing the performance of different schools it is important to recognise that students will have different starting points and the proportion of these students will vary from school to school.

"Learning for life – success for all"

Indicators of absolute attainment therefore need to be complemented by measures of the progress made by students from one Key Stage to another.

CVA provides this measure as it recognises progress based on prior attainment but also adjusts to account for the impact certain external factors have on the progress of individual students. Importantly this provides a level playing field between schools in different localities and different circumstances.

### **How does it work?**

1. Following the Key Stage 2 assessment at the end of Primary School in Year 6, schools will obtain a prediction of GCSE attainment. This prediction is based on the student's performance and attainment up to that point.
2. This prediction is then adjusted to take account of the student's circumstances as outlined above.
3. A value added score is obtained by measuring the difference (positive or negative) between the student's actual attainment, aged 16 and that predicted by the model when they were aged 11.

Therefore, should a student outperform the prediction made at Year 6 then this will contribute to a positive value added score.

### **Benefit to Parents**

Contextual value added scores provide a much fairer measure of the effectiveness of a school as it creates a level playing field between all schools in all areas with students from all backgrounds. CVA scores coupled with a School's Ofsted Report and GCSE results collectively provide a much more complete and accurate picture of a school's performance and contribution to student progress and GCSE attainment.

“Learning for life – success for all”