



BEECHEN CLIFF

Cognitive Abilities Tests (CATs) and New Group Reading Tests (NGRT)

At Beechen Cliff School pupils undertake these tests to help identify:

- an individual pupil's cognitive strengths and weaknesses in order to inform teaching and learning • identify needs and target resources better
- identify pupils who may be underachieving
- inform academic target setting

CAT scores provide a useful source of information about pupils' developed reasoning abilities, almost independent of their classroom experience and learning to date. (In reality no test can ever be completely independent of a child's experience prior to taking it).

The Cognitive Abilities Test (CATs) assesses a pupil's ability to reason with and manipulate words, quantities and spatial/geometric/figural patterns.

Verbal

The verbal reasoning element assesses reasoning processes using the medium of words. Such processes include: identifying relationships between things (eg. 'big' is the opposite of 'small'); creating correlates of such relationships (eg. 'big' is to 'small' as 'thick' is to 'thin'); identifying classes ('hat', 'gloves,' ___?: pyjamas, slippers, scarf), and reasoning deductively ('A' is taller than 'B' and 'B' is taller than 'C'; therefore 'A' is taller than 'C'). It is therefore an assessment of reasoning with words, not that of language skills such as speaking, listening or writing.

Quantitative

The quantitative tests look at the same processes but use numbers as the symbols. For example, determining rules by analogy and applying these to new cases (2->3, 9->10, 6->_?), determining patterns and relationships in series (1, 4, 7, _?), or combining elements to form number sentences.

Non-verbal

The non-verbal tests again look at reasoning processes but use shapes and figures. These tests measure what has been termed 'fluid intelligence', that is, an ability to reason that is not strongly influenced by cultural and educational background. Because these questions require no knowledge of English language, or the number system, they are particularly useful when assessing children with poor developed English language skills or pupils who may have failed to achieve in academic work for a range of motivational reasons.

Spatial

These tests assess how well pupils can create and retain mental images of precise shapes and objects and then manipulate these in their minds. This is important in many spatial disciplines such as: Technology, Science and Maths. As spatial tests make no demands on verbal ability, they can be effective indicators of potential with pupils of poor verbal skills.

The test results provide us with a profile of the pupil. This profile can help us to understand the pupil's areas of relative strength and weakness as well as giving an indication of potential. Due to the technical nature of the data that the CATs provide us, we do not normally report the scores to pupils or parents. However, these can be requested if required.

Digital Reading Test

We also include an additional test to the CATs tests, the Digital Reading test. This test produces an assessment of pupils' reading abilities. The test provides information on sentence completion and comprehension skills allowing us to identify where difficulties lie. This means that we can give the best possible support for every pupil from the start of Year 7. We plan to share this information with parents at the start of Year 7.