

10th September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers of students in Year 7,

We hope that students have enjoyed their first few days at the Stanway School and have been greatly enthused meeting their new teachers and classmates. As part of the transition to Secondary School, in a “normal” academic year, students would have sat Key Stage 2 Tests in English and Mathematics in the summer of Year 6. However, due to the ongoing effects of the global pandemic, these tests were cancelled by the government. Consequently, as a school, we will be running a diagnostics test with all Year 7 students in the next month to help better understand their abilities, targets and potentials. These are known as CATs (Cognitive Ability Tests).

CATs are designed to help identify areas where students have the potential to achieve and areas where students may need extra support. The test examines four bespoke areas of ability:

- Verbal reasoning
- Non-verbal reasoning
- Quantitative reasoning
- Spatial ability

A student with a low quantitative score may experience some difficulties with equations and mathematics, for instance, while one with a low verbal score may find it more difficult to access extended reading activities. Similarly, those with a high spatial score may be inclined towards more practical and performance related subjects. These insights help us to personalise the student's learning, ensure that the appropriate support is available where required and to set challenging but achievable targets for their subjects as they go through the school.

The CATs also provide us with reliable indicators for national tests and examinations including GCSEs and A levels, so can be used by the school as a measure of a student's abilities and will help establish class sets for subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science as we move further into the year.

The CATs is divided into three sections that need to be sat at the same time (the test runs for 3 x 45 minute sessions). Therefore, to complete these tests, Year 7 students will be taken off their usual timetable on the following dates and will spend the first part of their day registering and undertaking the tests online (until breaktime):

Friday 17th September 2021: 7R-LJO, 7R-SWA, 7S-DBA, 7S-RHN and 7W-PBE

Tuesday 28th September 2021: 7W-LHO, 7G-MHA, 7G-NPA, 7N-ASH and 7N-SJN

Students do not need to make any specific preparations for this test, as it does not test any curriculum content. Instead, tasks involve thinking about shapes and patterns (Non-Verbal Reasoning), words (Verbal Reasoning), numbers (Quantitative Reasoning) and some questions are answered by mentally generating and transforming visual images (Spatial Ability). When the results have been collated and

Headteacher: Mr Jonathan Bland BSc (Hons)

01206 575488

admin@stanway.school

www.stanway.essex.sch.uk

Winstree Road, Stanway, Colchester, Essex, CO3 0QA



processed, we will then be providing a breakdown to you as parents and carers, so that you can also help with your child's education at the school. We hope to get these results to you by the end of this first half-term of the school year.

For more information about the CATs, please visit

<https://support.gi-assessment.co.uk/knowledge-base/assessments/cat4-support/information-for-parents/information-for-parents/>.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Player', enclosed within a light grey rectangular border.

Mr John Player

Deputy Headteacher