



9th September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: CAT4 Testing

As part of your child's first term at Iceni Academy, we would like to conduct some tests with them called 'CAT4' tests. These CAT4 tests are taken regularly by students in schools across the country.

Your child will take part in these during the coming weeks before half term during normal lesson time. There are four tests in total, and each takes 45 minutes.

Please find below some further information about the CAT4 tests.

What is CAT4 and how do we use it?

The Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) is a diagnostic assessment that is designed to help students and their teachers understand how they learn and what their academic potential might be. It assesses how students think in areas that are known to make a difference to learning.

While many other tests focus on a child's attainment in core subjects, CAT4 is designed to give schools a much broader, more rounded view of each child, their potential and how they learn. Results help teachers decide about the pace of learning that is right for a student and whether additional support or challenge is needed.

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).

CAT4 is based on years of research and development. The current edition took five years to develop and the involvement of 25,000 students across the UK. It is a well-known assessment in schools; teachers value its ability to provide an understanding of what a child is capable of rather than defining them by their understanding of a body of knowledge in particular subjects.

How are CAT4 results used?

At Iceni Academy it will enable us to firstly set accurate individualised targets and secondly it will enable us to target support towards every child to help them reach their full potential. The data collected will be used with other information (such as results from Key Stage 2, national numeracy and literacy tests), to support teaching and learning for all students.

Can students practise for CAT4?

We strongly advise against any kind of practice ahead of a CAT4 test as this will alter the reliability of test scores. The point of CAT4 is that it is not a test of learnt knowledge and it needs to be as unaffected as possible by any external factors, such as practice. Think of it like an eye test; if you practice ahead of an eye test and memorise the card, your diagnosis may not be correct and valuable information may be missed.

CAT4 is a timed assessment and is administered under formal conditions. However, each section of the assessment includes introductory information with practice examples, and these will familiarise the students with the style and format of the questions. These sections are not timed and may be repeated.

Is additional time allowed for students with SEND?

CAT4 is a timed assessment and additional time is not permitted as this will affect the reliability of the results. CAT4 is not just about what and how it tests but how the questions are answered within a set timeframe. The timed element makes it diagnostically very powerful.

CAT4 subtests are generously timed and most students reach the final questions, however there may have been a minority of students during the standardisation process who would have obtained higher scores if they had been given more time. Therefore, giving extra time to a particular student could give an inflated view of their relative ability when comparing their results with the CAT4 norms.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the academy.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Staniforth." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Miss A Staniforth
Assistant Principal