

Academy News

30th September 2022



Good afternoon,

This week, we held a very successful Post-16 Pathways event for Year 11 students and their parents / carers. It was great to see so many students at the event considering their next steps with a real sense of excitement and ambition.

We also had a very positive Year 11 Geography Field Trip yesterday to Southwold. My thanks to everyone who has helped to make both of these important experiences possible this week.

The start of term has seen some changes regarding curriculum and teaching. In the coming days Mr Taylor will be writing to parents/carers of students in Year 10 and 11 regarding changes to the Enrichment programme and I also want to inform you that Ms Hutchison, our Head of Drama, is not going to be returning to our school; I will be writing to the parents / carers of Year 10 and 11 GCSE Drama students at the start of next week to update you on our next steps for this important subject.

I do also want to inform all parents/carers that we have our after school study space available from 3.30-4.15pm every Monday to Thursday. This year our out of hours club will be led by Mr Newstead; so please do encourage your son / daughter to stay after school for this additional support if that is possible.

Next week, we will have a series of Open Morning tours for prospective students and their families. We are very much looking forward to opening our doors to the local community once more; I know feedback from our tours in July for parents/carers of Year 8 students was very positive. Alongside these tours we will have our Open Evening on Thursday 6th October and, again, I am very much looking to showcasing our wonderful community school. At the centre of our Open Evening will, of course, be our students.

Finally, following on from Mr Anstee-Parry's communication on Year 6 -7 transition last week we have decided to undertake a series of assessments for Year 7 students next week to ensure we have accurate and updated base-line data. Alongside a reading assessment we will also be setting Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs). The students do not need to revise for these assessments and should not feel anxious about them. Further information on CATs can be found on page 2.

I wish you all a restful weekend,

Tom Maltby
Headteacher

Calendar / Upcoming Events

3rd-5th October - Open Mornings, 9.00am-10.30am

6th October - Open Evening, 6.00-8.00pm

13th October - Year 7 Information Evening

21st October - PD Day

24th-28th October - Half Term

(Full details of all events will be sent direct to Parents/Carers.)

Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs)

What are Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs)?

CATs are marked tests which assess your child's general intelligence. They differ from SATs in that they test ability rather than knowledge. The results are used as a benchmark of your child's overall intelligence, abilities and potential.

They can also be used in order to help the school stream your child (either in all subjects or just in certain subjects) and to predict future achievements such as GCSEs. In fact, the results can be used as a benchmark of your child's progress throughout their secondary years.

The results should also help the school spot any issues and identify where your child might need some support. Not all secondary schools use CATs, but many do.

What do CATs Assess?

There are four main areas which are assessed:

- Verbal Reasoning – Thinking and problem solving with words
- Non-Verbal Reasoning – Thinking and problem solving with shapes and space
- Quantitative Reasoning – Thinking and problem solving with numbers
- Spatial Reasoning – Visualising, picturing and moving shapes around

Understanding the Results

Much like SATs, the results are given as Standardised Age Scores, with the average score for Year 7 being 100. Your child will normally receive a score therefore somewhere between 90 and 110.

But what about my Child's SATs Results?

Even though your child has taken their SATs in the summer term of Year 6, many secondary schools will still retest at the beginning of Year 7. This is to help them get a better understanding of your child's ability and any issues they may have. CATs are a different type of test.

Does my Child need to revise or prepare for CATs?

Whereas SATs tested your child's knowledge, CATs test ability and potential. Official past papers are not available for revision purposes and so practising specific content is both difficult and not particularly helpful. In fact, CATs are designed to be taken without revision.

The importance of reasoning skills for GCSE

However, CATs are all about your child's reasoning skills. In fact, reasoning is an increasingly important part of the National Curriculum during Key Stages 3 and 4 and ultimately forms part of your child's GCSEs. But reasoning skills are not always taught consistently well at primary school level. What's more, it is always beneficial to help your child develop their reasoning skills both for life at school and at home.

Reasoning explained

Reasoning is quite hard to define. It means systematic thinking, problem solving and with maths, it involves thinking through mathematical problems logically in order to arrive at an answer. It also involves being able to identify what is important and what isn't and the ability to explain a solution. As such, it is at the very heart of your child's mathematical ability both in school and in practical day to day life.

Verbal reasoning (i.e. thinking with words) is equally important and involves problem-solving, thinking about texts, following written instructions to come up with a solution and the ability to analyse.

Strong reasoning skills can help build your child's confidence and are also important across all other subjects including science, history, geography and languages. The ability to reason well doesn't just affect the outcome of your child's GCSE, it's a critically important life skill which can have a great impact on many careers.

Term Dates : 2022-2023

Autumn Term	1 st September – 16 th December 2022
Half Term	24 th – 28 th October 2022
PD Days	1 st , 2 nd September, 21 st October
Spring Term	3 rd January – 31 st March 2023
Half Term	13 th – 17 th February 2023
PD Days	3 rd January, 10 th February
Summer Term	17 th April – 21 st July 2023
Half Term	29 th May – 2 nd June 2023

Students return on Wednesday 6th September 2023

Safeguarding Information

During school hours, please contact Mr Anstee-Parry (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or Mrs Watson (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) - 01473 328317

At all other times, please contact Customer First : 0808 800 4005 or
If you believe there is an emergency and a child is at risk of **immediate harm** please call the Police on **999**.

Useful Information

Links to support services

Suffolk County Council - [The Parent Hub](#)

Childline: 0800 1111

Online bullying: [thinkyouknow.co.uk](https://www.thinkyouknow.co.uk)

Feeling down, low or depressed:

[youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk) or [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org) Call 116 123 for free

Sexual Assault: Call NSPCC 0800 136 663 or help@nspcc.org.uk