



Christopher Whitehead
Language College
& Sixth Form

Supporting your child

Higher Learning Potential

Higher Learning Potential

at Christopher Whitehead Language College
and Sixth Form



The driving principle behind our HLP policy is based on the CWLC ethos that every student should have the opportunity to attain their full potential and achieve excellence. In light of this principle, it is important that we challenge all students including those who have been identified as possessing higher learning potential.

HLP students are now identified as those entering Key Stages 3, 4 or 5 at a **significantly higher** level than their peers.

Standardised assessment offers evidence that individuals possess the potential to achieve through a wide range of abilities in academic subjects, sport, the arts and leadership, which links directly with the school ethos of pursuing excellence. These standardised assessments are Cognitive Ability Tests, or CATs.

These tests are, of course, only part of the picture as far as a child's ability goes. Ability and flair in the creative and performing arts, in practical subjects and in sports needs also to be recognised and nurtured. From September 2020, this is undertaken in a separate way to the academic identification that CATs provides. This leaflet aims to give you information about the **academic potential** of students with higher than average CAT scores.



CATS Data and what it means

The Cognitive Abilities Tests (CAT) are assessments of a range of reasoning skills.

The tests look at three types of reasoning: words, numbers and shapes or figures, i.e. **verbal**, **quantitative**, **non-verbal** and **spatial** reasoning.

Each test gives a score of 70 to 141, with 100 being the average. Each test standardised to allow for a child's age, e.g. so a child born in August is at no disadvantage to one born in September.

Scores between 112 and 118 are above average. At CWLC, students scoring within the range **119 to 141** (the maximum) on any of the four tests are identified on our list of high learning potential (HLP). We also categorise students who are in receipt of Pupil Premium and with CATs of above 112 as HLP, as their potential may have been missed previously.

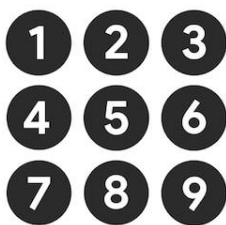
127+ is the 'very high' category of CAT scores, well above average and categorised as HLP*.

The higher the score in CATs, the easier a student is likely to be in grasping new concepts and processing complex ideas and information.

The four tests explained:



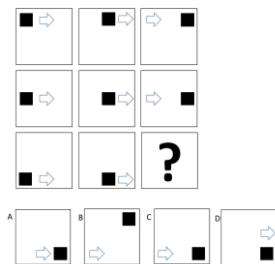
The verbal reasoning element assesses reasoning processes using words. It is **not** an assessment of reasoning with words, nor wider language skills such as speaking, listening or writing. Rather, it is the ability to understand and logically work through concepts and problems *expressed* in words. It can indicate how well a student can extract and work with meaning, information and implications from text. It's all about logic expressed verbally.



The quantitative reasoning tests look at the same processes but use numbers as the symbols. It assesses a student's ability to use numbers in a logical and rational way. It consists of items which assess understanding of such things as number series, numerical transformations, the relationships between numbers and **the ability to perform numerical computations**

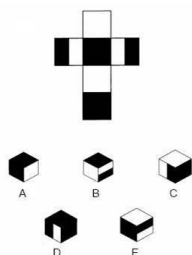
Verbal reasoning and quantitative reasoning together are most related to academic ability.

However, non-verbal and spatial reasoning can indicate potential in practical areas and problem-solving. We think this is worth encouraging and exploring too. Students that score highly in these two areas but perhaps not in the first two, may not seem as able as the highest performing students. But their potential in grasping practical concepts, problem-solving and figuring out non-verbal signals, can remind us to not overlook their capabilities in a range of subjects.



The non-verbal reasoning tests again look at reasoning processes but use shapes and figures.

Because these questions require no knowledge of English language, or the number system, they are particularly useful when assessing children with poor English language skills or disaffected pupils who may have failed to achieve in academic work for motivational reasons. **Non-verbal reasoning can indicate how quick a student might be to learn new concepts and make connections.**



Spatial reasoning is a category of reasoning skills that refers to the capacity to think about objects in three dimensions and to draw conclusions about those objects from limited information. Someone with good spatial abilities might also be good at thinking about how an object will look when rotated. It can help with practical problem solving and visual estimations. **Spatial reasoning can indicate how well a student can grasp visual signs, diagrams and visual sequences; 'seeing the world in 3D'.**

Correlation between CATs and potential in subject areas

The strength of the relationship between CATs scores and success in subject areas can be measured by a statistic called the **correlation coefficient**. A value of **zero** indicates no relationship between the two measures, whereas a value of **one** indicates a perfect positive relationship. The table below shows the correlation between CAT standard age scores and students' subsequent GCSE outcomes.

	Strong Correlation (0.5+)			Significant Correlation (0.45+)		
Verbal Reasoning	English Lang DT: Food Drama History Music Science (Comb)	English Lit DT: RM French IT PE Additional Science	Business Studies DT: Textiles Geography Maths Religious Studies	DT: Graphics	Biology Physics	German
Quantitative Reasoning	English Lang History	English Lit Maths	Geography Science (Comb)	Music RS	Business PE Physics	DT: RM IT
Non-Verbal Reasoning	English Lang Science (Comb)	Geography	Maths	DT: Graphics DT: RM RS	English Lit History PE	DT: Food IT
Spatial Reasoning	Geography	Maths	Science (Comb)	Art & Design	DT: RM English Lang	Science (Comb.)

What provision can you expect for your HLP child?

In the Classroom

Through our professional development and departmental review systems, we endeavour to ensure all teachers have access to the most effective methods for meeting HLP students' needs:

- All HLP students are identified to teachers (privately) to help with grouping and planning;
- Teachers know how CATs scores correlate with their subjects and how this might show potential;
- Enriched or wider content provided wherever appropriate;
- Consistently high expectations;
- Questioning is tailored to stretch and challenge, with a differentiated approach to which students are asked more sophisticated and higher order questions;
- Models of excellence shared and practised.

Extra-curricular

- Build on our existing opportunities and liaison with careers and higher education links;
- Online tutorials about memory, the brain and mindsets, so that students HLP understand more about how to maximise their learning;
- 'Master classes' (mostly online) will be introduced as the year goes on and offered by members of staff based on personal specialist knowledge;
- Regular access and links with our sixth form and the students;
- HLP/HLP* students 7-11 invited to Impetus lectures; extended to parents and carers too where appropriate;
- Mentoring for disadvantaged HLP students; all offered a significant adult.

What can you do to support your HLP child?

Try not to refer to or think of your child as 'gifted', as this often doesn't help motivate students to learn. A more helpful message is that even innate ability needs to be worked at if potential is to be realised. As the famous film producer Samuel Goldwyn is often quoted as saying: "*The harder I work, the luckier I get.*"

Your child will only occasionally be asked to complete extra work because they have finished first; completing content is not a sign of a higher standard or better quality work. Instead, they may be encouraged to consider the depth of their thinking; apply their knowledge in more detail; complete the work with higher expectations than their peers, or approach tasks in a more creative way.

Don't forget also, you are parent or carer of a bright child but one who is also a teenager! Do not despair if they have a period of disengagement and seem oblivious to your enthusiasm and intervention. Too much pressure may even make them feel resentful. Gentle guidance, a range of opportunities offered and the acceptance that potential needs hard work to blossom will all help to work towards the goals we know they are capable of.

Being placed on the HLP register is not a label of 'genius', nor is it a guarantee of success, but we will do our best to bring out your child's potential and offer opportunities that create interest, challenge their thinking and engage their learning.