



Shacklewell Primary School
Shacklewell Row, London E8 2EA
Telephone: 0207 254 1415

swoffice@newwavefederation.co.uk
Executive Headteacher: Ms Nicole Reid
Headteacher: Mr Matthew Trahair

Wednesday 16th September 2026

Dear Year 6 Families,

Re: CATs Testing

This half term, your child will sit a series of short CATs (Cognitive Abilities Tests) which are used by Hackney secondary schools to band the year 7 cohort into ability groups. The aim of the tests is to ensure that each school admits a wide range of children of different abilities.

Unlike national curriculum assessments (such as SATs), Cognitive Abilities Tests do not measure memorised knowledge or subject specific learning in subjects like English or Maths. Instead, they assess a child's underlying reasoning abilities and learning potential across four main areas:

- Verbal Reasoning: Thinking and problem-solving using words.
- Non-Verbal Reasoning: Problem-solving using visual patterns, shapes, and diagrams.
- Quantitative Reasoning: Working with numbers and mathematical relationships.
- Spatial Reasoning: Visualising and manipulating 3D shapes and space.

It's important to note that children should not carry out revision for Cognitive Abilities Tests, because these assessments measure natural reasoning preferences rather than memorised subjects or taught facts. At Shacklewell we ensure children are introduced to the question types beforehand by their class teacher so that they know visually what to expect.

The CATs test will be completed by pupils on an iPad and the tests will start on the week beginning Monday 28th September 2026.

If you have any questions regarding CATs, please feel free to ask your child's classteacher or contact leadership via the school office.

Warm regards,

Matt Trahair
Headteacher