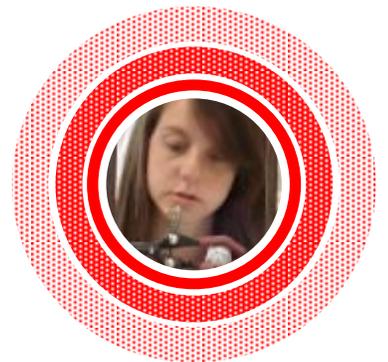




Understanding your CATs and planning for success



*A guide for students and parents
November 2011*



An Outstanding Training, Science and Sports College



What are the CATs?

CAT stands for Cognitive Assessment Test. It is a measure of ability in three broad areas:

- ❑ Verbal = word puzzles.
- ❑ Quantitative = number puzzles.
- ❑ Non-verbal = shape and space.

Although it is possible to improve on CAT tests with practice, they depend less on what you have learned than other types of test.

Why do we do the CATs?

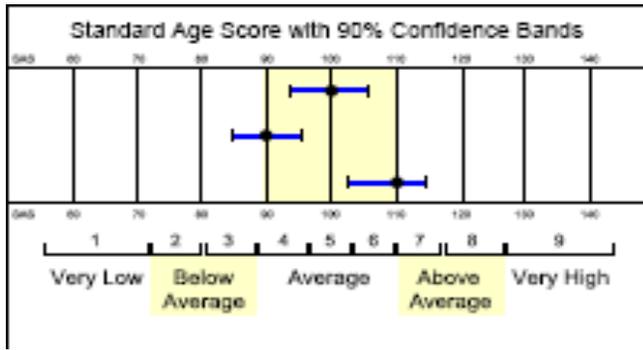
- ❑ To give students, parents and teachers an indication of student potential at GCSE.
- ❑ To identify or highlight possible 'hidden talents' that may have been missed by more traditional school work or National Curriculum tests.
- ❑ To allow Redborne to tailor a programme of study that is best suited to the needs of individual students.
- ❑ To give Redborne up to date standardised information against which we can judge future progress.

Understanding the CAT results

Battery	Number Attempted	Raw Score	SAS	Stanine	Nat. Perc. Rank
VERBAL	78	70	112	7	78
QUANTITATIVE	58	57	130	9	98
NON-VERBAL	66	61	127	9	96

- ❑ Raw score = actual score on the test
- ❑ SAS = standard age score:
from 60 to 140 where 100 is the average
- ❑ ST = stanine ('standard nine'):
the band of achievement from 1 (lowest) to 9 (highest)
- ❑ Nat. Perc. Rank = national percentage ranking: where you are in relation to the population as a whole (on a scale from 1 to 100).

What's a confidence band?

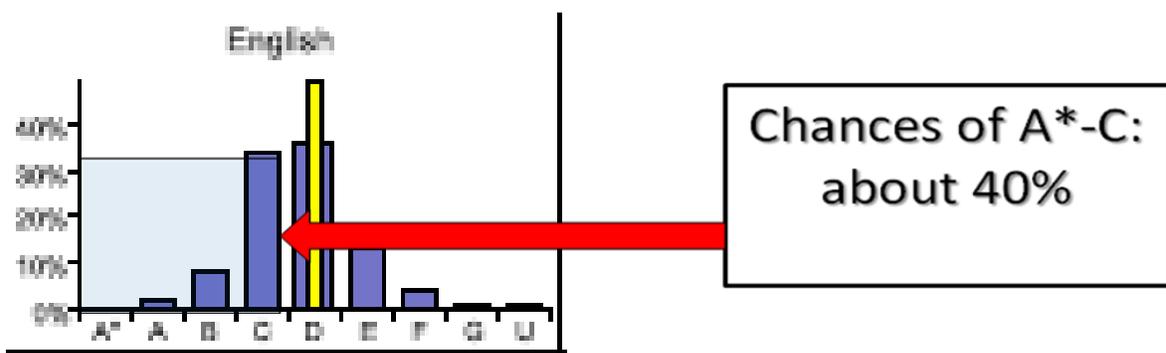


- ❑ Confidence bands show the likely range (90% chance) of the mark you would get if you did the test again.

Using the chances charts

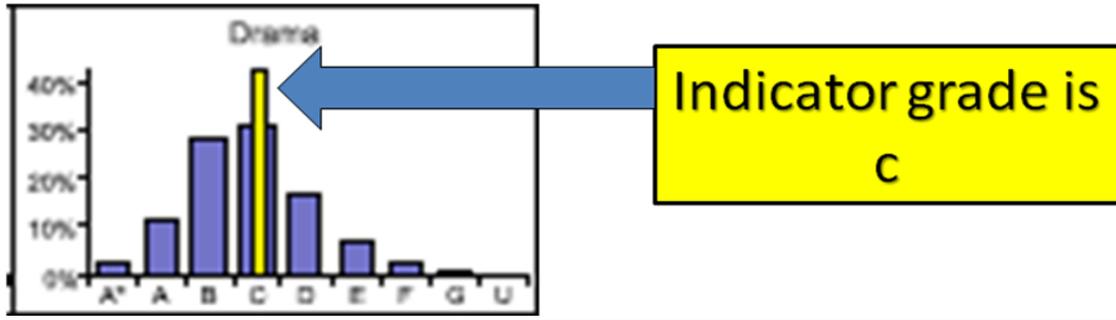
Differences in the chances charts may reflect:

- ❑ the individual profile (a student may have a higher score on one skill test than another);
- ❑ statistical differences at a national level (especially between core and option subjects).



Indicators based on CAT tests

- The indicator is the average or most likely grade for someone of your prior achievement.



The most likely grade is a C, BUT:

- about 40% of students did better than this;
- some students got every grade from A-G.

Using indicators from Key Stage 2

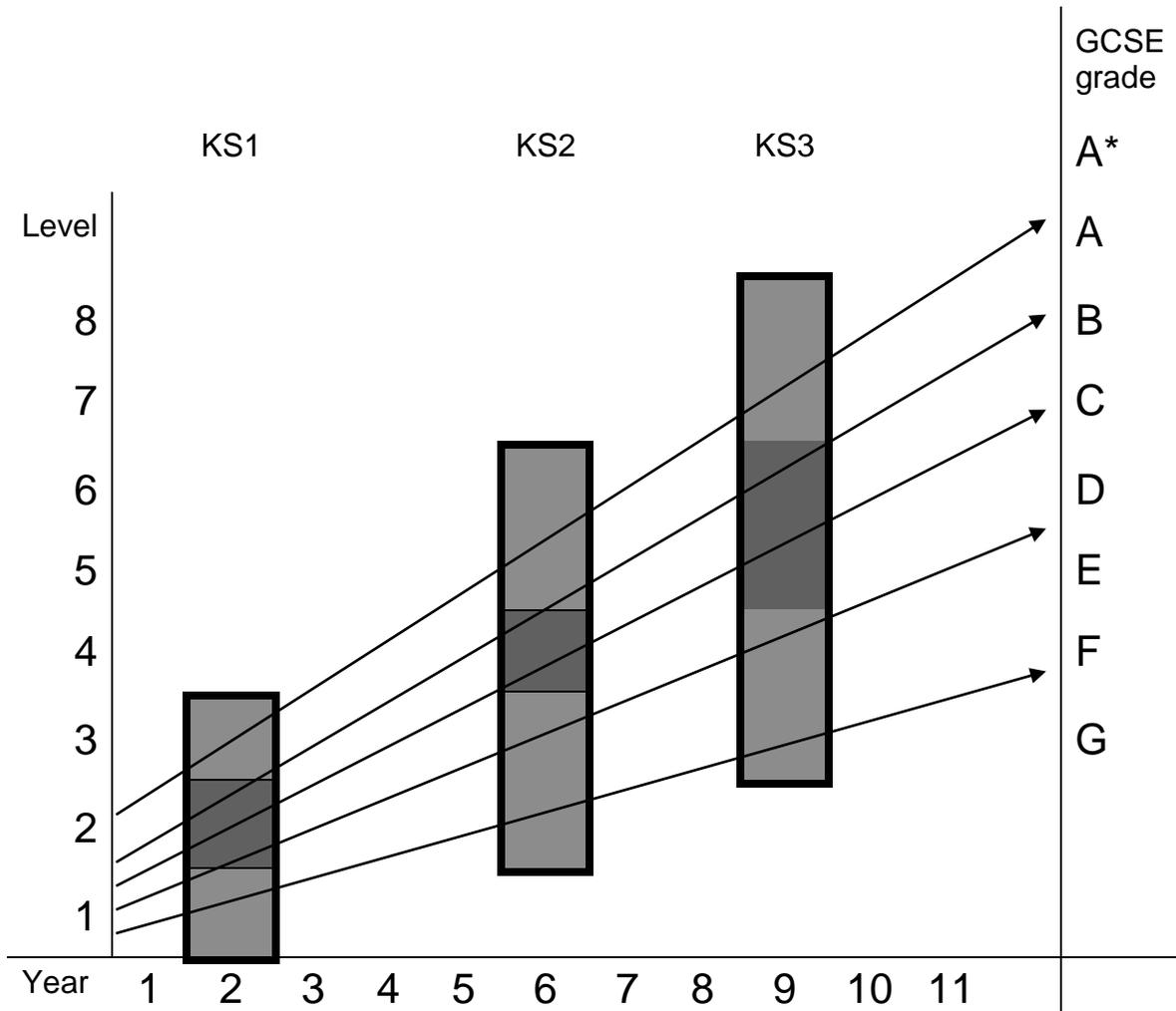
If you got this level at age 11	At GCSE the most likely grade is
2	F-G
3	D-E
4	B-C
5	A*-B

The shaded box shows the government's expectation for the majority of students. If you are making better progress than this, then you should be really proud of your achievements.

Once again, these are only statistics, not predictions. They do not say anything about you; they just tell you what other people have got in the past. If you work hard, you may well do better than this.

National Curriculum Levels

The whole progression chart can be displayed on a graph.



But aren't I more than just a statistic?

- ❑ Absolutely! It's important to understand what the indicators tell you ... and what they don't.
- ❑ Indicators can tell you:
 - the most likely level or grade for someone who got the same test score as you;
 - the chances of you achieving a higher or lower grade.
- ❑ They don't predict your result because they take no account of your **effort** and **attitude**.

So why have we awarded you these indicators?

- ❑ We haven't! They are purely based on CAT test scores.
- ❑ Indicators say nothing about you; they are about other people with similar marks in the CATs.
- ❑ Later in the year, we will report on how well you are actually doing, and you can compare this level against the indicator.
- ❑ The indicators we use on the progress checks will be based on Key Stage 2 data from middle schools – this is the data that OfSTED uses to measure student progress.

So what is good progress?

- ❑ We are all unique individuals, with our own talents, skills and ambitions.
- ❑ It would not be fair to expect everyone to reach the same standard, but we can expect everyone to make good progress.
- ❑ The statistics show how other students with similar scores have done in the past. You can see the most likely grade in any subject. This is the indicator grade.
- ❑ Reaching the indicator grade would represent reasonable progress – it's what the average student would get from your position now.
- ❑ Beating the indicator grade would be a very good achievement – you should be really pleased if you manage this.

Can you beat the indicator?

- ❑ You could be one of the students who makes progress at a faster rate than the average.
- ❑ In 2011, Redborne students beat their CAT indicators, over their best 8 subjects by 54 points (over one grade per subject)!
- ❑ Students beat the indicator for total points by a massive 126 points – that's about three extra C grades.

Setting personal targets

- ❑ A **target** is likely to include an element of additional challenge, or personal ambition. This may be higher than the indicator.
- ❑ Targets should be achievable, but there should be an element of pride involved in reaching a target.
- ❑ Only you can say what you will be satisfied with – but your teachers can help advise you on whether your goal is realistic.
- ❑ We should definitely congratulate students if they achieve their targets!

What if the indicators are lower than you want?

Remember:

- ❑ It's an indicator, not a prediction.
- ❑ Up to half of all students across the country achieve better than the indicators – that's what an average means.
- ❑ If your effort is high you **can** make a difference.
- ❑ Most Redborne students beat their indicators – that's why we have been rated 'outstanding'.
- ❑ It's never too late to make improvements.

How can students make a difference?

- ✓ Practise your reading: books, newspapers and magazines can all help.
- ✓ Come to school regularly – good attendance is associated with high achievement.
- ✓ Eat a healthy diet – especially a good breakfast.
- ✓ Get to lessons on time, concentrate in class and use the lesson time effectively.
- ✓ Behave well, and co-operate with your teachers.
- ✓ Do homework regularly – this can be the equivalent of an extra year's schooling during Key Stage 3 and 4.
- ✓ Show initiative – support your learning in lessons by reviewing work you have done, and preparing for topics coming up.
- ✓ Balance your school work with your social life.
- ✓ Be proud of your achievements!

What can parents do?

- ✓ Take an interest – your attendance tonight shows that you care.
- ✓ Check the diary to ensure that students are keeping up with work.
- ✓ Let us keep in contact via e-mail to keep you up to date with the latest news.
- ✓ Encourage as much as possible – we all like praise when we've done well.
- ✓ Be realistic with expectations – students are all individuals.
- ✓ If possible, find a space at home where students can work undisturbed.
- ✓ Encourage a balanced and sufficient diet – hungry students won't learn well, and nor will students 'high' on sugar.
- ✓ Negotiate fair agreements about time to be spent watching TV or playing computer games – and stick to them!