Progressive Achievement Tests

New Zealand teachers use a variety of tests to determine what level students are at, what progress they are making, and where they may need extra help. Progressive Achievement Tests, commonly known as PATs, are one of the main sets of tests schools use.

PATs are multiple-choice tests designed to help teachers determine achievement levels of Year 4-10 students in Mathematics, Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary, and Listening. The test results help teachers decide what kinds of teaching materials are needed and which methods or programmes are most suitable for their students. PATs are also important because they identify the progress a student is making from year to year.

PAT:Reading Comprehension assesses how well students understand the text they are reading. Each test is organised around several extended pieces of writing which include stories, poems, reports and explanations.

PAT:Reading Vocabulary assesses students' ability to understand the words they read. Each question is based around a key word that is embedded in a short sentence. Students are asked to choose a synonym that best represents the meaning of this word from a list of five possible alternatives.

PAT:Listening Comprehension measures a child's ability to understand spoken material. Students listen to a passage and then answer questions. It helps teachers detect children with poor listening skills and is also useful in identifying those children whose listening comprehension performance is significantly different from their ability to comprehend written material.

PAT:Mathematics covers number knowledge, number strategies, algebra, geometry and measurement, and statistics. Like the others, PAT:Mathematics is for Year 4-10, but there is an additional, slightly easier test aimed at year 4 which Tauranga Primary chooses to use in Year 3.

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In Mathematics, Tauranga Primary School assesses student achievement against the Number framework.

What is the Number Framework?

The Number Framework is intended to help teachers, parents and students understand the stages of learning of number knowledge and understanding.
There are two sections to the Number Framework. The Strategy section describes the processes students use to solve problems involving numbers - how they work things out. The Knowledge section describes the key items about number that children know and can recall quickly.
The two sections are linked, with children requiring knowledge to improve their strategies, and using strategies to develop new knowledge. There are two types of formal assessment that we use to guide the teaching and learning programmes, GLoSS and iKAN.

GLoSS (Global Strategy Stage)
The GloSS assessment enables teachers to identify the strategy stage students are operating at. There are three areas, or 'domains' within the Strategy section, which describe a child's ability to solve different types of problems (additive, multiplicative and proportional). This assessment is administered as an interview between teacher and student. The interview consists of a series of strategy questions which can be administered to individual students in a few minutes.
The interview consists of a series of questions that increase in difficulty and includes questions in all three strategy domains. Students move through these questions until they become too difficult for them to answer correctly.
Example of a subtraction question: There are 4 packets of biscuits with 24 cookies in each pack. How many cookies are there altogether? Attention is payed to the strategy the student uses to answer the question as well as the answer given.
Example of a proportional question: You can make 21 glasses of lemonade from 28 lemons. How many glasses can you make from twelve lemons?

iKAN
The IKAN assessment identifies the knowledge stages students are operating at across all five knowledge domains, known as the global knowledge stage. There are two forms of IKAN assessment, an interview, used in Years 1-3 (NUMPA) and a written test, mainly used in Years 4-8). This assessment measures achievement and next learning steps in the following three 'domains'
Number Identification and Order - activities to help children learn to read numbers and know the order of numbers.
Place Value - activities to help children learn how 10s, 100s, 1000s, tenths, hundredths, thousandths etc are used.
Number Facts - activities that will help children learn their addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts.

STAR (Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading)
The purpose of the STAR is to supplement the assessments teachers make about progress and achievement in reading. The STAR may be administered at any time in the school year. At Tauranga Primary School we administer the test in Year 3 at the beginning of the year. We use various parts of the test in Years 4-6 to identify specific teaching needs in reading.
There are 4 main components:
1. **Word recognition**: this subtest shows how well students can decode words that are familiar in their spoken vocabulary. In the absence of any verbal context, the students must decode, accurately, using letters and sounds.
2. **Sentence comprehension**: the task is reading for meaning. This subtest assesses the skills of decoding and the ability to use a range of sources to gain meaning.
3. **Paragraph comprehension**: the "cloze procedure" here assesses reading comprehension by requiring students to replace words which have been deleted from the text. Students use the context of the surrounding text as cues to meaning.
4. **Vocabulary range**: this subtest assesses students' knowledge of word meanings in context.