Alphabet School Assessment Overview

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<h1 style="text-align:center">Values and Beliefs about assessment</h1>

At Alphabet School we believe that assessment is the bridge between teaching and learning

No matter how carefully we design and implement the instruction, what our students learn cannot be predicted with any certainty. It is only through assessment that we can discover whether the instructional activities in which we engaged our students resulted in the intended learning. Assessment really is the bridge between teaching and learning.

<div style="text-align:right">Wiliam, 2013</div>

We have a commitment to use assessment information effectively to improve learning for every student in the school. This gives us a sense of collective responsibility for success in education of every student at Alphabet School. This is done by building strong partnerships with whānau and the use of effective assessment. We believe the concept of assessment should be viewed in the broadest sense. Assessment can mean anything from test results to observation and discussion during instructional time and even student self-assessment. Most assessment should be observational during daily classroom instruction.

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning and teachers' teaching as both student and teacher respond to the information that it provides. With this in mind, schools need to consider how they will gather, analyse, and use assessment information so that it is effective in meeting this purpose.

Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is best understood as an ongoing process that arises out of the interaction between teaching and learning. It involves the focused and timely gathering, analysis, interpretation, and use of information that can provide evidence of student progress. Much of this evidence is "of the moment". Analysis and interpretation often take place in the mind of the teacher, who then uses the insights gained to shape their actions as they continue to work with their students.

<div style="text-align:right">Pg. 39 New Zealand Curriculum</div>

It is our responsibility as a school to keep family/whanau well informed of student achievement and progress through effective reporting processes. This depends on excellent teacher knowledge of their students and ongoing communication when required.

Knowledge of the Learner

We acknowledge the power and value of teacher assessment in the classroom. Classroom teachers make decisions minute by minute, day by day to ensure students are being well supported but challenged in their learning. The teacher's evolving knowledge of the learner is highly valued and is essential to informing ongoing programmes of learning. A strong knowledge of students is critical in making dependable teacher judgements.

Assessment tools

To support teachers throughout the year diagnostic and standardised assessments have been included in the assessment overview. The primary purpose of these assessments is to provide teachers with evidence to inform ongoing cycles of inquiry to improve the teaching and learning taking place in the classroom.
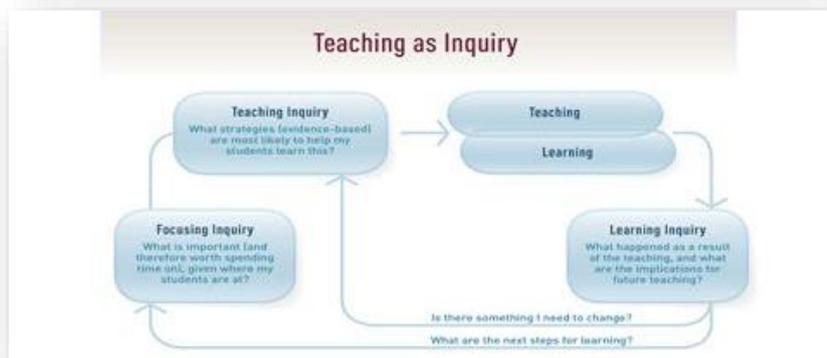
Normed data can also bring a national perspective to the data by providing comparative data (e.g. national means and curriculum expectation).

Assessment tool data can also provide confirming or challenging information about a student's current achievement level.

Confirming – 'The test result and my knowledge of the learner indicate a similar level of achievement'.

Challenging – 'I would have thought the student would have performed better on that test based on my knowledge of the student'.

'I am surprised how well the student did based on my knowledge of the student'.

When challenging information is received more evidence may be required, but it does not mean the teacher judgment is wrong. Test results are not always representative of a student's ability and this should be acknowledged when interpreting and basing decisions on such data.

Student involvement and multipurpose

Assessment information has the greatest impact on student progress when it's shared in a constructive manner with students and whanau. It is a powerful form of feedback as it engages the teacher and student in constructive talk which identifies what the student is currently able to do and helps forms next steps in learning.

Assessment information can also be used at group, class, team, school and BoT level to inform educational decisions. This type of analysis will involve aggregation and disaggregation of data to identify strengths and weaknesses in student learning and the achievement of particular priority groups (school target students, Maori, Pasifika, students with special education needs and students from lower socio economic backgrounds).

Effective assessment
The characteristics of effective assessment from Pg. 40 NZC provide excellent criteria for teachers to evaluate the assessment practices and tools they use. Effective assessment:

• **Benefits students** – It clarifies for them what they know and can do and what they still need to learn. When students see that they are making progress, their motivation is sustained and their confidence increases.

• **Involves students** – They discuss, clarify, and reflect on their goals, strategies, and progress with their teachers, their parents, and one another. This develops students' capacity for self- and peer assessment, which lead in turn to increased self-direction.

• **Supports teaching and learning goals** – Students understand the desired outcomes and the criteria for success. Important outcomes are emphasised, and the teacher gives feedback that helps the students to reach them.

• **Is planned and communicated** – Outcomes, teaching strategies, and assessment criteria are carefully matched. Students know in advance how and why they are to be assessed. The teacher's programme planning is flexible so that they can make changes in response to new information, opportunities, or insights.

• **Is suited to the purpose** – Evidence is obtained through a range of informal and formal assessment approaches. These approaches are chosen to suit the nature of the learning being assessed, the varied characteristics and experiences of the students, and the purpose for which the information is to be used.

• **Is valid and fair –** Teachers obtain and interpret information from a range of sources and then base decisions on this evidence, using their professional judgment. Conclusions are most likely to be valid when the evidence for them comes from more than one assessment.

Overall Teacher Judgements

The concept of an 'Overall Teacher Judgement' is used when making decisions in relation to student achievement. The majority of evidence informing this decision should be based on what the teacher notices and recognises in the course of everyday teaching and learning in the classroom. The processes developed for making Overall Teacher Judgements at Alphabet School are based on the diagram below. It describes the types of evidence used for making an Overall Teacher Judgement, the weighting of the evidence used and how regularly it should be gathered.
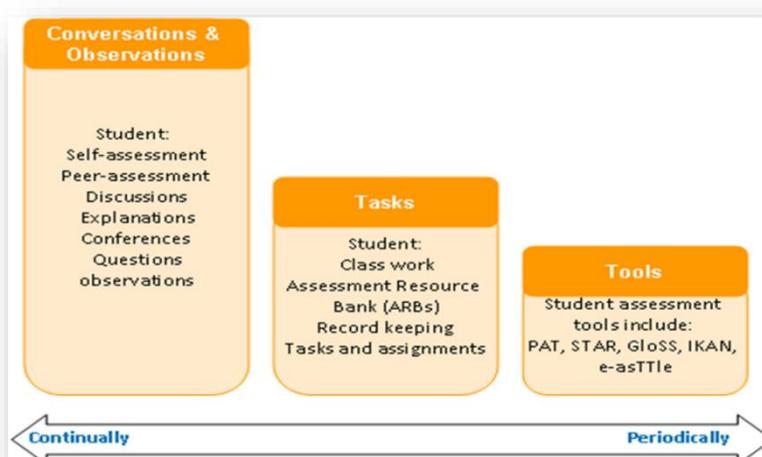
Part of the process in developing dependable judgments is through moderation. This is the process of developing shared understandings of reference materials, progressions and what should be noticed and recognised in the decision making process. It benefits all staff involved as it increases their curriculum content knowledge while providing a process for aligning decision making.

The following pages describe the diagnostic and standardised assessment tools used at Alphabet School and the rationale for using them.

Alphabet School Assessment and Reporting Overview 2015

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11
Term One		IKAN (Y 3-8)		P. A. Listening (Y3-8)	P. A. Listening (Y3-8)		P.A. Maths (Y4-8)	STAR (Y3-4*) e-asTTle Reading (Y3-8*)	STAR (Y3-4*) e-asTTle Reading (Y3-8*)		
Term Two	e-asTTle Writing (Y1-8) GloSS (Y 3-8*)	IKAN (Y3-8*) GloSS (Y 3-8*)	GloSS (Y 3-8*)								
Term Three		IKAN (3-8*)						GloSS (Y 3-8*)	GloSS (Y 3-8*) e-asTTle Writing (Y1-8)	GloSS (Y 3-8*)	
Term Four	STAR (Y3-4*) e-asTTle Reading (Y3-8*)	IKAN (Y3-8*) STAR (Y3-4*) e-asTTle Reading STAR (Y3-8*)	P.A. Maths (Y4-8)								

Ongoing Assessments: JAM to align with anniversary reporting, Running Records (see notes), Observation Survey (see notes).

☐ (light blue) Assessment and reporting   ☐ (yellow) School events

Assessment tools used at Alphabet School

Need to put a statement about identification of accommodations for students.					
Tool	**Which Students**	**When**	**Tool description and overview.**	**Rationale for use and guidelines**	**Timing**
GloSS	Y 3-8	T2 Wk 1-3 T3 Wk 8-10	The Global Strategy Stage (GloSS) assessments are a set of face-to-face interviews designed primarily to assist classroom teachers in determining students' best-fit strategy stages on the Number Framework (Ministry of Education, 2008, pp. 15–17). GloSS is designed for students in Years 3 to 8. The latest interviews and recording sheets should be used – latest update June 2013 http://www.nzmaths.co.nz/gloss-forms	Provides identification of the global stage students have reached in number strategies. Gives the teacher a detailed insight into the processes being used by individual students. Teachers of Year 3 students should make a choice between JAM and GloSS depending on the abilities of the student. **Term Two** – Use Interview One or Two **Term Three** – Use Interview Three or Four	No requirement for using GloSS in Term 1 as the data from the previous year can help inform the teaching programmes in Term 1 Terms 2 and 3 – this provides monitoring, progress and achievement data. The information can inform the teacher of progress that has been made, gaps in learning and next learning steps. It can also confirm or challenge teacher judgments.
IKAN	Y 3-8	Week 1 of every term	The Individual Knowledge Assessment of Number (IKAN) can be used to determine a student's stages on the knowledge domains. There are four versions of the IKAN, and each is available in two formats. The Flash versions allow you to choose to start the assessment at a particular part. The mp4 versions are video files which you can download and use offline. Both versions now include audio. For the Flash versions you will need to unmute the audio before starting the assessment. In response to user feedback, and in consultation with the Ministry of Education, the timings have been extended for some questions in the IKAN assessments to allow sufficient time for students to record their answers (18/9/12). http://www.nzmaths.co.nz/ikan-forms	This quick and easy assessment provides useful information on student's number knowledge. Analysis of the student answer sheet can be done both vertically and horizontally and progress can be easily monitored. IKAN 1 in Term One IKAN 2 in Term Two IKAN 3 in Term Three IKAN 4 in Term Four	IKAN is to be done at the beginning of each term because it is able to be done quickly and easily and is able to provide ongoing information to both teacher and student in relation to learning needs and progress.

P.A. Maths	Y 3-8	Term 1 Week 7 Term 4 Week 3	Includes questions from all strands of the curriculum. Within each test, questions are organised according to 5 categories; • number knowledge; • number strategies; • algebra; • geometry and measurement; • and statistics. Progress can be tracked through the scale score. Individual reports can show strengths and weaknesses. Student results can also be compared with both year level and curriculum level norms.	This standardised test was chosen as it provides an overview of skills in all mathematical strands. Test results will also help teachers to make informed decisions about the kinds of teaching materials, methods, and programmes most suitable for their students. **Please do not read this test to your class**. As per admin instructions teachers can read a question to an individual if requested.	This assessment is taken in the first and last terms so that learning needs and progress can be identified. Individual and group (class, school etc.) data can be used to identify specific content needs and progress within the year can be seen by comparing scale scores.
Junior Assessment of Mathematics (JAM)			The JAM assesses the achievement of a student in relation to levels one and two of The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and the mathematics standards for years 1–3. The assessment consists of 11 modules. Each module can be used as a separate assessment, or the modules can be combined to provide a broader assessment. Teachers will need to select the modules that are relevant to the needs of their students. The number modules of JAM replace the diagnostic interview (NumPA). The Algebra, Geometry and Measurement modules do not assess all concepts in these strands.	JAM provides a more comprehensive assessment for our junior students than the GloSS tool. It can be used be used flexibly or in an ongoing manner or more comprehensively at anniversary judgement times. JAM is to be used as a school entry assessment to fully identify the skills and knowledge the student is bringing to schooling.	This assessment is seen as an ongoing tool to be used with students as needed. As the tool is broken into modules teachers have some flexibility as to how and when they use this tool. It can be used close to anniversary dates to support the making of OTJs.
P.A. Listening	Y 3-8	Term 1 Week 5	The test provides information about students' ability to focus their listening and to make meaning from texts that are read to them. Because the student is listening rather than reading, their response provides information about their ability to make meaning without having to decode text.	Helps teachers detect students whose listening skills are inadequately developed, or those students who have listening comprehension skills significantly higher than their reading comprehension skills.	This has been placed early in term one so that early identification of students with obvious discrepancies in data can be made and learning support initiated.
Supplementary Test of Achievement in Reading (STAR) 2nd Edition 2011	Y 3 – 4 only	Term 1 Wk 8-9 Term 4 Wk 1-2	The STAR test was revised in 2011. There are more test forms; new content; and student achievement is reported on a measurement scale allowing progress to be tracked over time. 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 and there are two parallel forms. The subtests are:	This test is a good introduction to standardised testing for Year 3 students. This test was chosen because each test assesses a range of reading skills that correspond closely to the main components of reading skill outlined in The Literacy Learning Progressions (Ministry of Education, 2010). We have targeted this test mainly for Year 3 students. Teachers of Year 3 and 4 students should make the choice between this test and e-asTTle Reading. Only the very able	The timing of this assessment provides teachers the chance to use data from the previous year to initiate literacy programmes in the class including grouping. Assessment at this time can provide supporting evidence for changes to

			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. *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. *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. *Vocabulary range:* this subtest assesses students' knowledge of word meanings in context.	students in Year 3 should be considered for e-asTTle Reading. The lowest achieving Year 4 students may be better served by taking the STAR test rather than e-asTTle Reading.	initial groupings and placements. The end of year assessment provides supporting evidence of progress and achievement and also helps identify learning needs which can be addressed during the remainder of the year.
e-asTTle Reading	Y 3 - 8	Term 1 Wk 8-9 Term 4 Wk 1-2	e-asTTle is a web-based assessment tool. e-asTTle allows teachers and school leaders to electronically set reading comprehension tests that are aligned to the curriculum, when they want and at the level they want; to analyse results; and to measure student progress over time. Every test can be tailored to the specific needs of the students. It gives teachers a rich picture of how well a student, class, or school is doing compared with national average performance and the curriculum requirements (including curriculum levels). It allows comparisons with other groupings such as gender, ethnicity, English as a second language, or 'schools like mine'.	We have chosen this test in reading because it focuses on the literacy acquisition areas of making meaning and thinking critically which should be the focus at this area of the school. It provides teachers and students with curriculum related data that can easily support student learning. There is also great flexibility in test creation and administration. Teachers can create tests that students can complete on paper, online or online with a reading passage booklet. The extensive range of reports analyse achievement against curriculum levels, curriculum objectives and population norms. These can be generated for individuals, groups, classes or even whole school.	As per STAR assessment
Running records	NE – Y3	Ongoing	Taking running records regularly is an essential part of teachers' planned targeted monitoring to ensure that the students' learning needs are met. The running records procedure provides a framework for systematically observing a child's reading behaviour. This procedure, developed by Marie Clay, employs standard methods with recognised conventions for recording exactly what the child does as they read. Through careful observation, reliable scoring and thoughtful interpretation, the teacher gains significant insights onto the child's: • strategies for solving unknown words • competence in drawing together all the sources of information • self-monitoring and self-correction strategies • willingness to take risks	Running records are an integral assessment tool for junior classes in New Zealand. They provides evidence that, when engaging with a text, a particular learner does (or does not): • use their knowledge of the world gained through prior experiences; • use their understanding of the meaning of the text (that is, of what makes sense); • use their knowledge of language features such as sentence structure, the relationship between words, and the special features or patterns of stories or other genres (that is their knowledge of how language works); • apply their knowledge of particular visual aspects of print, including the way that specific letters (and letter clusters) relate to specific spoken sounds and the	Running records should be used to inform teaching on a regular basis. Junior class teachers may take running records: • at the beginning of the year to establish the teaching needs and reading levels of all students • with a new student to the class for the same reasons • when grouping students for instructional reading

				conventions of print, such as the direction of words in a text or the letters in a word;	• during regular reading time, to monitor individual students' reading progress
			In addition to the core procedure, the teacher may explore the child's comprehension of the text by inviting them to retell the story or by asking questions that require them to interpret what they have read**. (These, however, are not part of the running records procedure.)** **Running records are not intended for use with fluent or independent readers, whose development needs probably relate to making deeper meaning and thinking more critically about texts.** "If running records are used with older students (Years 4 to 8) **there should be a special reason for taking them.** They are excellent for recording the early phases of literacy acquisition but before long what the reader is doing becomes too fast and too sophisticated for teachers to observe in real time. Literacy processing shifts gradually towards this." (Marie Clay, *An Observation Survey*, 2002). Teachers should be well versed in the conventions and processes of a running record. If you are not well trained in this area please refer to the following resource and relevant **DVD**. ***Using running records: A resource for New Zealand classroom teachers.* Ministry of Education, 2000**	• cross-check some information to monitor their reading for meaning and accuracy; • draw together all their sources of information and make a decision about how to read the text. The information gained from running records can be used for various purposes. It can help the teacher to: • plan teaching based on what a particular learner attends to or overlooks when they read and what is appropriate for their next step; • identify and observe the particular difficulties of specific students; • monitor the progress of individual students as they learn to use a range of information and strategies to make meaning from text; • track the progress of individual students as they learn to read texts of increasing difficulty; • decide how to group students for instructional reading. (P7 *Using running records: A resource for New Zealand classroom teachers.* Ministry of Education, 2000.)	• when the teacher thinks the reader is ready to move on to more difficult material; • when a student appears to be having difficulty with reading. With students in their first year at school, and with students having difficulties in reading, Running Records may be taken at least once a month – sometimes as often as once a week. For students making good progress once a term may be sufficient after the first year of schooling. (P8 *Using running records: A resource for New Zealand classroom teachers.* Ministry of Education, 2000.)
e-asTTle Writing	Y 1 - 8	Term 2 Wk 1 Term 3 Wk 9	e-asTTle writing is a test of a student's ability to write a continuous text. Teachers choose one of 20 prompts from one of 5 purposes. E-asTTle writing is marked through the use of a rubric and exemplars for seven different elements of writing (e.g. Ideas, Spelling). It gives teachers a rich picture of how well a student, class, or school is doing compared with national average performance and the curriculum. Progress over time can be easily reported and analysed by this tool.	We have chosen this tool as it is the only standardised writing tool currently available to schools. e-asTTle writing provides a prompt for students to write about. It is able to convert rubric scores to curriculum sublevel scores (e.g. 3B, 3P, 3A) and give an overall score in writing. It provides specific feedback (rather than simply providing a score) and identifies areas of student weakness and strength that may otherwise go unnoticed. Information about a student is most often noticed by teachers during the marking phase. A quick couple of	The timing of this assessment acknowledges the time and effort required to mark scripts and analyse data. Early Term 2 assessment also provides It will timely data for use in reporting to parents by either teacher or student. It will help identify specific learning

Observation Survey	New entrants (first 3 week of school and near 6th birthday)	Ongoing	The standardised Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement is the worldwide name for what has been commonly known in New Zealand as the Six Year Net. Administered one-on-one, this observational test, or set of tasks, is designed to check an individual's basic reading and writing concepts so that early intervention can be put in place if necessary. The one-on-one administration of the test takes approximately 45 minutes to complete. **The person who administers the test must be properly trained.** The Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement includes six assessment tasks: • **Concepts About Print** to discover what the student understands about the way spoken language is represented in print. • **Letter Identification** to find out which alphabetic symbols the student recognises. • **Word Reading** to indicate how well the student is accumulating a reading vocabulary of frequently used words. • **Writing Vocabulary** to determine if the student is building a personal resource of known words that can be written. • **Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words** to assess phonemic awareness and spelling knowledge through hearing and recording sounds in English spelling. • **Running records** to provide evidence of how well the student is learning to use knowledge of letters, sounds, and words to understand the messages in text.	The Observation Survey is an integral part of assessment of early student learning in New Zealand. We use this tool to provide us with a great deal of information and for the following reasons in particular. 1. **School entry data** – this will provide baseline data of the knowledge and skills the student has on arrival at school. To ensure this is information is valid, assessment of a new student should take place as early as practically possible (i.e. within the first three weeks). A process for sharing this information with parents (and Jam results) should be in place. 2. Administering this near to the student's **sixth birthday** (assuming they started school at 5) will assist in confirming or challenging OTJ decisions for 'After one year at school" in reading and writing. This should ideally be done within a month of their birthday. 3. **Progress** – comparing school entry and six year old data will provide a clear picture of student progress in the first year at school. 4. **Identification for learning support** - Students at school entry and at six may show results that indicate some learning difficulties. This tool will provide further evidence of the need for further learning support.	The standardised timing for this tool is necessary to provide consistent and accurate information for individuals and school data. The tool is too large and too time consuming to be used as an ongoing assessment tool.
Other Tools for consideration Record of Oral Language - Early identification of oral language difficulties					

bullet point notes taken at this time can be valuable for future learning discussions. | goals in writing for individuals and groups.