

TABLE C.—SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND YEARLY INCREASE FOR EIGHT YEARS.

YEAR.	School Attendance.							Yearly Increase on						
	Number belonging at Beginning of Year.	Number belonging at End of Year.	Average Attendance.				Average Attendance expressed as Percentage of Roll Number.	Number belonging at Beginning of Year.	Number belonging at End of Year.	Average Attendance.				
			Strict Average.		Working Average.					Strict Average.		Working Average.		
			Fourth Quarter.	Whole Year.	Fourth Quarter.	Whole Year.				Fourth Quarter.	Whole Year.	Fourth Quarter.	Whole Year.	
1877	..	55,688	..	..	41,773	40,837	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1878	50,849	65,040	49,435	45,521	50,639	47,996	..	..	9,352	..	..	8,866	7,159	..
1879	59,707	75,566	57,301	53,067	58,738	54,724	76.1	8,858	10,526	7,866	7,546	8,099	6,728	..
1880	68,124	82,401	62,946	60,625	64,407	62,234	76.6	8,417	6,835	5,645	7,558	5,669	7,510	..
1881	74,359	83,560	63,009	61,822	64,744	63,735	76.4	6,235	1,159	63	1,197	337	1,501	..
1882	76,309	87,179	66,426	63,709	68,288	66,145	76.4	1,950	3,619	3,417	1,887	3,544	2,410	..
1883	79,416	92,476	70,077	67,373	72,214	69,843	76.7	3,107	5,297	3,651	3,664	3,926	3,698	..
1884	84,833	97,238	74,650	72,657	76,832	75,391	77.9	5,467	4,762	4,573	5,284	4,618	5,548	..
1885	90,670	102,407	80,183	78,327	81,663	80,302	78.5	5,787	5,169	5,533	5,670	4,831	4,911	..

The number of pupils increases at a much greater rate than the population. The estimated increase of the population in 1885 was, as appears from figures furnished by the Registrar-General, 18,116, or about 3.2 of the population at the end of 1884, but the daily average attendance increased at the rate of 6.5 per cent. The most remarkable anomaly exhibited by this table is the sudden break in the rate of increase at the year 1881. This was discussed in the report for the year 1882. The great increase in the three preceding years can be traced to the impulse given to the establishment of schools, and to their growth, both by the operation of the new Act—especially as it effected the abolition of school fees—and by a rate of expenditure on school buildings that has not been equalled since. In the year 1881, when these causes of increase had lost much of their power, a direct check was imposed by a new rule, which forbade the attendance of children under the age of five years. Since that time the rate of increase, though it has never again reached the high level of 1878 to 1880, has always been greatly in excess of the rate at which the population increases. Information as to the rate of increase of that part of the population which is of school age is unfortunately not available.

It will be observed with satisfaction that the difference between the strict average and the working average does not maintain a steady proportion to the averages themselves, but is less now than it was in 1878. The working average, as has been often explained, is the average attendance modified by excluding from the calculation the occasions on which the attendance has been less than half of the number of pupils on the roll.

The classification of pupils according to age presents no new feature worthy of remark, except that the proportion of children under seven years of age is steadily diminishing, and the proportion between seven and ten years increasing, these changes taking place, however, in such a way that, on the whole, the proportion of those under ten remains practically unchanged; and that, similarly, above the age of ten there is a tendency to increase in the proportion of those above the age of thirteen years. The statistics of age and sex for the several districts are given in Table No. 1 (Appendix, page 1), of which Table D is a summary.

TABLE D.—AGE AND SEX OF SCHOLARS AT THE END OF 1885.

Ages.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Percentages for Five Years.				
				1885.	1884.	1883.	1882.	1881.
Five and under seven years ..	11,199	10,171	21,370	20.87	21.46	22.20	22.64	22.73
Seven and under ten years ..	20,062	18,473	38,535	37.63	37.05	36.78	35.56	35.41
Ten and under thirteen years ..	15,537	14,426	29,963	29.26	29.26	29.00	30.09	30.39
Thirteen and under fifteen years ..	5,346	5,197	10,543	10.29	10.34	10.07	9.82	9.60
Over fifteen years ..	883	1,113	1,996	1.95	1.89	1.95	1.89	1.87
Totals for 1885 ..	53,027	49,380	102,407	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The number of boys in this table exceeds that of girls as 51.8 per cent. exceeds 48.2. In 1878 (the first year for which statistics of this kind are available) the proportion was 52.2 to 47.8. The attendance of the girls is slightly less regular than that of the boys, the proportion of boys to girls in attendance according to the statement of the working average in Table A being 52.5 to 47.5.