

practically undone. At the unannounced visit the Inspector sees the school in its every-day attire, and he is afforded an opportunity of forming a judgment on its organization, methods, and discipline, of making suggestions and recommendations relating thereto, and generally of taking cognisance of those features in a school by which its success or failure may be more justly gauged than by tables of results. As a consequence of my inability to make a larger number of inspection visits I have experienced considerable difficulty in assigning to teachers marks for classification, the test of examination being for this purpose more or less fallacious. The following table shows at one view the examination statistics for the year:—

SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR THE WHOLE DISTRICT.

Standard Classes.	Presented.	Absent.	Excepted.	Failed.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
						Yrs. mos.
S 7	26	...	...	...	...	...
S 6	143	...	9	35	99	14 2
S 5	395	14	26	127	228	13 8
S 4	720	26	55	196	443	12 3
S 3	1,119	55	100	271	693	11 9
S 2	1,180	49	56	99	976	10 6
S 1	1,091	42	24	46	979	9 5
P.	2,913	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	7,587	186	270	774	3,418	*

* Mean of average age, 11 years 11 months.

From this table it is seen that, of the 7,587 pupils whose names were on the examination schedules, 4,648 were entered for examination in standards. A total of 4,462, or 96 per cent., attended; and of these, 3,418, or 77 per cent., passed in the standards for which they were presented. The percentage of failures in standards (the "exceptions" being excluded from this calculation) was 18. As compared with those of 1887, the gross results for the past year exhibit a slight increase in the general percentage of passes. The improvement indicated by this increase is common to all the standards except the highest. But the evidence of increased efficiency is really stronger than it appears to be from a statement of the percentage of passes. A comparison of the above table with that of 1887 shows that a relatively larger number of pupils have this year been presented for examination in standards. This important element of increased percentage of presentation must be taken along with the increased percentage of passes if we are to have a fair test of the efficiency of the work done in our schools. It is also a gratifying fact, and worthy of notice, that the number of children presented in the higher standards continues to increase from year to year. The number entered for examination in Standards V. and VI. is 104 in excess of that of the previous year, while the number of schools in which these classes are taught is also greater than formerly.

Of the pass subjects those generally taught with least skill and success are reading, writing, composition, and arithmetic. On each of these and on some of the class subjects it may be worth while to make a few remarks.

READING.—Sufficient time seems to be set apart for this subject, but the methods of teaching it cannot yet in every case be regarded as satisfactory. There is too frequently a total want of previous preparation alike on the part of teachers and of pupils. In too many instances it appears to be taught as if mere verbal accuracy were all that is to be aimed at. Measured by this standard, the reading may be called fairly satisfactory, though such faults as indistinctness of utterance and inattention to pauses occur with unwelcome frequency. But the number of schools in which the pupils show a sufficient comprehension of the language of the lessons is still exceedingly limited. In order that more attention may be given to the intellectual side of the reading lesson, I take this opportunity of informing teachers that in future a "pass" in reading will be conditional on a fairly accurate explanation of a few phrases or sentences selected from the year's lessons. With respect to the recitation of poetry, the best that can be said is that the children are fairly word-perfect, teachers evidently considering it their duty simply to hear the lines without in any way attempting to correct errors, explain difficulties, or set before their pupils a good model for imitation. The number of schools in which poetry is recited with taste and expression can be told on one's fingers.

WRITING.—The penmanship of a very large number of our schools, as judged from the copy books, continues to be very creditable, and the papers handed in by the scholars on examination day are, on the whole, neat and carefully written. The slate writing of the First and Second Standards has been gradually rising in quality, but nothing like the same care is taken with the writing in the exercise books. This is rarely satisfactory, and occasionally so inferior that I have had to recommend the discontinuance of such exercises as part of the home work. In like manner a good deal of careless scribbling and figuring on slates is to be met with in almost every school. The indifference of many teachers with regard to the neatness and style of the every-day written work of the school is almost beyond belief. They seem to forget that a habit is the resultant of all our actions and doings in some particular direction, and that the habit of writing carefully as scholars do for the most part during the formal writing lesson is very apt to be counterbalanced by the habit of writing and figuring carelessly, day by day and hour by hour, on slates and in exercise books.

COMPOSITION.—To this subject I attach much importance. Although there are still too many schools in which composition is merely practised, not taught, in a very considerable number I am