

				Standard VI.	Standard V.	Standard IV.	Standard III.
1894	...	...	...	68	71	82	70
1895	...	...	...	75	49	74	77
1896	...	...	...	66	48	69	86
1897	...	...	...	81	68	75	78
1898	...	...	...	72	65	67	76

*Grammar and Composition.*—These branches, which are very closely connected, have in 1898 been examined together in one paper, the work in each being, however, assessed separately. It cannot too often be impressed on the minds of those responsible that a reasonable standard of efficiency must be maintained in grammar if the value of the school work as a whole is not to be lessened to a dangerous extent. Incorrect concords and other breaches of grammatical rules are serious defects in composition, and the preparation of the latter subject must be based on sound instruction in grammar. Yet barely half the schools have in this subject reached the mark "Satisfactory," while the percentage of passes in composition has fallen to 89. This result, as far as relates to composition, is still satisfactory, the chief defects being incomplete knowledge of the necessary forms in letter-writing, and the want of attention to sequence of thought in the various exercises. It is important in the training of pupils to secure a proper regard for the order of the various divisions of a subject.

*Geography.*—In the other pass-subjects much decried "cram" is possible to a very small extent. In geography, on the other hand, greater care has to be exercised in presenting tests that will secure intelligent preparation. For this reason it is to be regretted that the syllabus does not allow the setting of sketch-maps, except those relating to New Zealand. While lists of names may be obtained, it is often the case that the relative position of the places represented is very imperfectly known; and to test this nothing is as useful as a sketch-map. It is preferable to secure exact knowledge in reference to a smaller number of important places than to extend the list at the sacrifice of accuracy; and whether the drawing of maps is included or not in the annual test, advantage should be taken of its utility during the year. The percentage of passes in geography—77—shows a decrease of ten compared with that of the previous year, and one cause of the reduction is the sacrifice of thoroughness in the attempt to cover too wide a course.

*Manual Instruction.*—It is often overlooked that several subjects are, strictly speaking, to be included under this head. Writing, drawing, and needlework, as well as carpentry, are the result of training in manual dexterity, and all are important from both the educative and the practical points of view.

Although in writing the percentage of passes—98—is high, there are a few schools in which, in regard to the neatness of exercise-books, there has been retrogression. So far the vertical system of handwriting has not been adopted in this district, except in the Catholic schools, where, in spite of continual effort, its introduction has not been followed by encouraging results. At the same time the teachers have been advised to avoid too great a slope, the system most generally adopted being similar to the semi-upright. A legible hand is thus secured that will at the same time develop into a useful running hand.

In drawing the percentage of passes is 93. A distinct advance has been made in the instruction in model-drawing, which is the most difficult, and consequently the most backward, of the various branches. The attention paid to the definitions necessary for the lower standards and to proper methods in freehand is rendering the instruction in all branches more complete and less laborious. In connection with the Wellington Technical School, ninety-seven passes in first-grade drawing—freehand, geometrical, model, or scale—have been secured in 1898 by pupils of four schools of this district.

The results in needlework have during recent years continued to show improvement, especially since specimens of the necessary work have been substituted for garments whose tedious preparation left little time for careful instruction. Since the close of the year a new syllabus has been issued by the Education Department. In this reference to garments is omitted, and the course set for each class so limited in amount that a very high standard of excellence may be insisted on.

Beyond these branches, manual instruction is confined to that given to the carpentry class connected with the Kumara School. This class is composed of twenty-four pupils of the Kumara School with four outside students. The more advanced pupils have completed the course of exercises in wood-work set by the Education Department, and have constructed such articles as wheelbarrows, steps, towel-rails, and cupboards. The instruction has been carried on outside of the ordinary school-hours, and has produced very satisfactory results.

*Moral Training.*—It is doubtless quite unnecessary to prove that moral training receives attention in the schools, although a course is not specially provided for in the time-tables. Every part of the ordinary routine has its ethical side; for the performance of duty under direction necessitates moral training, and it would be impossible to conduct a school without it. This is recognised in the standard regulations, as the Inspector has to report in regard to each school on the "order and discipline, and the tone of the school with respect to diligence, alacrity, obedience, and honour"; also on the "manners and general behaviour of the pupils." In general the order and discipline are good. The chief defect is in the training of the pupils in satisfactory methods of oral answering. In reply to questions they should be taught to make statements distinctly and fully, using, where possible, a full sentence. This will be done habitually and with alacrity if regularly insisted on by the teacher. In regard to honesty I am glad to report that in certain schools where great vigilance had formerly to be exercised to prevent copying and other reprehensible practices at the examination, very satisfactory improvement has been effected, and that in this respect the pupils of this district are very generally trustworthy. No complaint is invited by the manners and