

Several new schools had not been long enough in operation to stand the test of a formal examination, and were therefore not examined.

The following tables will show at a glance, better than any verbal description of mine, what is the state of education in this district:—

TABLE I.—Showing the Percentage of Passes gained in the several Subjects of Examination.

Subject.							Percentage of Passes.
Reading	...	...	...	...	...	...	87.2
Spelling	...	...	...	...	...	...	72.2
Writing	...	...	...	...	...	...	87.1
Arithmetic	...	...	...	...	...	...	46.4
Grammar	...	...	...	...	...	...	26.4
Geography	...	...	...	...	...	...	44.0
History	...	...	...	...	...	...	17.0

TABLE II.—Showing the Percentage of Passes gained by each Standard in the several Subjects of Examination.

Standards.	Average age.		Reading.	Spelling.	Writing.	Arithmetic.	Grammar.	Geography.	History.
	yrs.	mos.							
Standard I. ...	9	6	89.6	86.0	91.4	56.7	...	...	...
Standard II. ...	11	5	86.8	83.3	86.9	41.1	...	46.5	...
Standard III. ...	12	5	81.6	55.4	83.3	49.5	29.2	45.3	14.5
Standard IV. ...	13	5	90.5	48.0	80.2	31.0	26.6	34.5	20.6
Standard V. ...	13	11	85.1	37.8	89.2	23.0	15.0	48.7	20.3

The percentages gained in arithmetic, grammar, and geography are very low, and may be accounted for on the following grounds, and others that will be referred to as the report proceeds: The basis of classification has hitherto been too narrow: many teachers, up to the time of the examination of their school, had formed no adequate conception of the work compassed by each standard of the syllabus: the examinations were conducted rigorously and under conditions differing, in many cases very materially, from those to which pupils had been accustomed when examined by their teachers.

As it is a matter of some importance that teachers should know wherein their methods are considered to be faulty, I now proceed to make a few observations on organization, and the subjects of instruction.

ORGANIZATION.—The time-tables have improved very considerably during the year. In many schools these documents are now skilfully constructed and faithfully adhered to; but in still too large a number they are only fairly constructed, and very indifferently adhered to even in my presence. From the fact that the teachers of these schools do not know their time-tables by heart I conclude that in my absence no attention whatever is paid to them. A few—and, I am glad to say, only a few—of our teachers seem to think that a time-table once made should serve for all time. Skilful managers find it difficult to make one that will serve, without some alteration, for even six months. In each standard there are several subjects of study, and it will often be found, if classes are systematically examined, as suggested in my last report, that pupils are advancing faster in one or two subjects than in others. To restore the balance the time-table must be altered; more time must be given to the weaker subjects, and less to the stronger. The distribution of the teaching power has improved in many of the small schools; but head-teachers of large schools do not sufficiently attend to the supervision of the work of their assistants and pupil-teachers. It is well for them to know that errors in organization count against them when marks are assigned in accordance with Regulation 12. Classification is still very faulty. The position of a child is determined too much by reading and spelling alone. The recent examinations have, however, shown that this basis of classification is much too narrow; and teachers will now, it is to be hoped, adopt some such plan as that recommended last year.

READING.—The percentage gained in this subject is to be regarded rather as the measure of familiarity with the forms and sounds of words than as that of ability to read intelligently. I said last year that reading was “much heard, but little taught,” and the remark will bear repeating. The reading lesson is conducted as if there were but one end to be attained—namely, facility in naming certain words in a given order. Pupils learn, as a home exercise, the meaning of the words explained at the end of the lesson, read the lesson in class, give, when called upon to do so, the meaning (synonym) of a word or two, and are then considered to have mastered the lesson. The fact that the main object of reading is to gain a mastery of the language employed, and, through this, familiarity with the matters treated of in the reading lesson, is in the majority of schools almost entirely overlooked. The result is that pupils get through their reading-book a time or two long before the rest of the class-work marked out in the syllabus has been overtaken. Parents then importune the teachers to put their children in a more advanced book—in other words, into a higher class. From the point of view of the parents the position taken up by them is not an unreasonable one. They think—most of them do so, at any rate—that when the child is able to read the book, he necessarily knows the book; nor is this to be wondered at, when so many teachers themselves fail to distinguish between knowing the words of a lesson and knowing the lesson itself. It were to be wished that teachers would give more heed to quality and less to quantity. It is not necessary that children should read much daily, but it is necessary that they should be made to think of what they read, to understand the language and the matter of the lesson, and to have their attention cultivated. In only a few schools are children accustomed to sustained attention. Whilst the reading lesson is going on it is quite a common thing to see half the class idling, looking about the room, or indulging in a *tête-à-tête* conversation. What amazes one most