

The progress as regards attendance for the last quarter of 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1883 is shown in the following table :

	On Roll.	Strict Average.	Working Average.
1880	4,891	3,656	3,765
1881	5,033	3,616	3,776
1882	5,488	4,174	4,284
1883	5,975	4,359	4,538

It will be seen that, deducting the numbers in the first line from those in the last, the increase for the four years of pupils on the roll is 1,084, the strict average 703, and the working average 773.

SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS.—The following has been the average attendance :—

Number attending.	Number of Schools.	Number attending.	Number of Schools.
Under 15	0	75 and under 100	2
15 and under 20	3	100 „ „ 150	5
20 „ „ 25	7	150 „ „ 300	2
25 „ „ 50	37	300 „ „ 500	1
50 „ „ 75	14	500 and upwards	1

There were in all seventy-two schools. Included in this number are three small schools whose teachers' salaries are made up by the local School Committee to the minimum of the Board schools. There were no half-time schools, or schools permanently closed at the end of the year

The following teachers were employed :—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Head-teachers	68	16	84
Assistant teachers	6	4	10
Pupil-teachers	8	25	33
	82	45	127

Besides these there were at the close of the year eleven teachers of sewing. As compared with 1882 there is an increase of five head-teachers, of five pupil-teachers, and of four teachers of sewing.

The following is the classification of the teachers :—

	Certificated.	Not certificated.	Total.
Male head-teachers	30	37	67
Male assistant teachers	2	4	6
Female head-teachers	8	8	16
Female assistant teachers	3	1	4
	43	50	93

Less than one-half of the teachers at the end of the year were certificated, the ratio being 46·2 to 53·8 per cent. As a number of teachers have intimated their intention of presenting themselves at the annual examination in January next, this undesirable state of matters will, no doubt, be remedied to a certain extent.

SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION.—In 1883 as compared with 1882 there was an increase of 3,087 in the number of pupils learning reading, writing, arithmetic, object-lessons, vocal music, and needle-work, and a decrease of 1,097 in the number of those learning grammar, geography, history, science, drawing, and domestic economy. This decrease can only be accounted for on the supposition that the teachers restrict the instruction in these subjects to the higher standards of the school only, and that in 1882 instruction was imparted in these branches to pupils occupying lower forms than was the case in 1883.

INCREASE OF THE CAPITATION GRANT.—The notification of an increase of 5s. per pupil in average attendance came most opportunely for the financial position of the Board, who, without it, would probably have been obliged to discontinue the payment of bonuses and rent allowances to teachers. The increased grant, however, has enabled the Board not only to meet these allowances, but to raise the salaries of teachers and the Board's staff to the current rate which obtained before the reductions were made. The Board has thus carried out the intention of the Government in dealing with the increase of grant, so as to benefit those for whom it was primarily made. The Board has also increased the salaries of teachers of schools with an average attendance of from twenty to twenty-five. The miserable pittance formerly paid to these teachers, and the precarious subsidies paid or promised to be paid by School Committees, hardly enabled them to procure the bare necessities of life. They are now placed in a more independent position.

NEW SCHOOLS AND BUILDINGS.—New schools and residences have been built at Thornbury, Fernhills, Spar Bush, Otama, Waikaka, Croyden, and Garston (formerly Fairlight). A new school has been built at Clifton, and large additions have been made to the Central and South Schools, Invercargill, and to those at Waianiwa, Gore, Winton, Mataura, Long Bush, Fortrose, Orepuki, and Riverton. School buildings are in the course of erection at East Forest Hill, and will be opened immediately after the harvest holidays. New school districts have been defined and publicly notified at Nightcaps, Otara, Redan Valley, South Hill End, Slopedown, and Kennington, while a number of other applications for new schools are under the consideration of the Board.

Great care is required in dealing with applications from small non-paying schools in sparsely peopled districts. Applications for the establishment of new schools in deferred-payment settlements all over the district are very numerous and pressing, and should the Board resolve to grant a school it is only adding a dead-weight to its finances, for which the small number of large schools can supply inadequate counterpoise. Should the Board decline the grant, the result will be that scores of children will be left to live without the means of education. Besides, no two localities