

uncertificated teachers are gradually being replaced by those who hold certificates; but it is manifestly impossible to secure the services of certificated teachers for every small school. The Board is glad to learn that the time for holding the annual examination of teachers will be changed to the month of December. It is hoped that the change will diminish the unavoidable interruption of school-work.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—The number of pupil-teachers has increased from 170 to 187. There has been no appreciable increase in the proportion of male pupil-teachers, the number of males being 14, as compared with 173 females. The supply of qualified pupil-teachers is adequate to but not in excess of the demand. Candidates are required to pass the Sixth Standard, or an equivalent examination, and to produce satisfactory certificates of character, health, and general fitness. The minimum age at which pupil-teachers are employed is sixteen years. Every pupil-teacher is required to undergo a probation of three months' service (with salary), before being formally indentured for the term of three years' service. The annual examination of pupil-teachers and candidates was held in July, and resulted as follows:—

Grade.	Examined.			Passed.			Failed.		
	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
First-year pupil-teachers ...	4	68	72	3	44	47	1	24	25
Second-year pupil-teachers ...	10	34	44	9	33	42	1	1	2
Third-year pupil-teachers...	...	2	2	...	2	2	...	...	...
Candidates for employment ...	1	6	7	1	3	4	...	3	3
Totals ...	15	110	125	13	82	95	2	28	30

The examination of third-year pupil-teachers was optional. Those first-year pupil-teachers who had lately passed the entrance examination were not required to come up again, except in one or two special subjects, such as needlework.

ATTENDANCES.—The following table shows a comparison of the numbers of schools and attendances for the December quarters of 1883 and 1884:—

—	Number of Schools.	Roll-Number.			Average Attendance.		
		Male.	Female.	Total.	Male.	Female.	Total.
December quarter, 1884 ...	224	9,492	8,897	18,389	7,696	6,990	14,686
December quarter, 1883 ...	217	8,785	8,335	17,120	6,941	6,407	13,348
Increase for 1884 ...	7	707	562	1,269	755	583	1,338

The average attendance during the year was 78 per cent. of the roll-number. This is the highest percentage ever reached in this district. It is mainly due to voluntary, not compulsory, attendance. The attendances of 314 Maori and half-caste children at Board schools are included in the returns.

AGES.—There were 446 scholars over school age admitted by leave of the Committees. The Board has issued a strict prohibition against the admission of children under five years of age, and teachers are instructed to procure a written certificate of age in case of any doubt.

INSPECTION AND STANDARDS.—The work of inspection and examination in standards is carried on by the four Inspectors. Provision is made, as far as possible, that every school shall be visited by an Inspector at least twice in the year, and that the inspection and examination in standards shall not be conducted consecutively by the same Inspector in the same portion of the district.

SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION.—Visiting teachers are specially employed to give and to direct instruction in singing, drawing, drill, and gymnastics. At the same time, teachers are expected, where possible, to qualify themselves to teach these subjects, and special classes are held every Saturday for their instruction. The work of the singing-teachers was tested by an examiner specially employed for the purpose, and was reported by him to be, on the whole, satisfactory. The Kindergarten system, introduced a year ago into the junior classes of the Wellesley Street School, has not been extended.

ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE.—The audited accounts of income and expenditure are subjoined to this report. Except as regards the moneys available for building purposes, the items throughout are in excess of those for 1883. The income was as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Statutory capitation grant ...	53,193	14	0
Special capitation grant ...	3,527	15	0
Grants for special purposes ...	3,428	14	8
Grants for buildings (1883–84) ...	9,682	0	0
District high schools ...	386	10	0
Miscellaneous receipts ...	184	5	2
Total ...	£70,402	18	10