

The following table shows the percentage of passes in each of the compulsory pass subjects in all classes. Reading and spelling might well be stronger in nearly all standards. Writing is excellent throughout, and occupies the place of honour with 94·4 per cent. of passes; while grammar, with composition, is lowest with 64·9. Arithmetic has 74 per cent. for all classes, but I should like to find it stronger in all standards from II. to VI. Geography has 74 per cent., and is strongest in Standard III. Drawing has 89 per cent., and came out in Standard IV. better than I expected, with a percentage of 82.

TABLE D.

Subject			Reading.		Dictation and Spelling.		Writing.		Arithmetic.		Grammar and Com-position.		Geography.		Drawing.		
Class.			Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	Number examined.	Per Cent. passed.	
Standard VI.			156	94·2	156	86·5	156	96·1	156	67·3	156	57·0	156	70·5	...	...	
" V.			332	86·1	332	73·5	332	96·4	332	62·7	332	66·2	332	62·9	...	...	
" IV.			654	86·5	654	68·2	654	92·2	654	59·5	654	59·2	...	...	654	82·1	
" III.			1,038	84·4	1,038	69·9	1,038	93·4	1,038	72·4	1,038	69·4	1,038	78·2	1,038	90·9	
" II.			1,043	83·8	1,043	82·4	1,043	95·2	1,043	77·0	...	...	...	...	1,043	90·3	
" I.			988	82·7	988	85·5	988	94·0	988	87·2	...	...	...	...	988	92·0	
Totals ... {			1889	4,211	84·7	4,211	77·3	4,211	94·4	4,211	74·0	2,180	64·9	1,526	74·1	3,723	89·3
			1888	4,086	84·1	4,086	79·4	4,086	93·9	4,086	73·8	2,043	65·9	1,459	76·2	3,016	93·0

Possible number of passes in subjects, 24,273; actual number of passes in subjects, 19,784: percentage of passes in subjects, 81·5.

INSTRUCTION.—*Preparatory Classes.*—The children in these classes are those who are not considered by the teachers sufficiently advanced for presentation in Standard I., and they numbered 2,644, or 37·3 per cent. of the number on the rolls on the days of the examination. The attainments of these children varied very much, not only in different small schools of about the same size, but also in different large schools. In one of the large schools the infants' mistress asked me to give the first division of her pupils addition sums of five columns five figures deep, and after doing so I found that, out of a class of thirty, all but two found the correct answer and wrote it in words, while the figuring was very fine. This first division also could write the tables without error to 12 times, while the second division could write to 7 times. These were the most advanced children presented to me, but at some other large schools the work was really good. Spelling often was very fine, especially when children were taught mainly by the phonic method. Indeed, this subject was not infrequently better in the P. class than in Standard I. In the small schools the work varied very much. Reading generally was so poor that teachers would have, after the examination, to form the future First Standard from pupils whose attainments in reading consisted in ability merely to recognise a few disconnected words on cards. In this subject more attention should be paid to the proper grouping of words in phrases. Children also should be thoroughly trained in the short and long vowel sounds, and in the functions of the consonants. Counting generally was very fair, but there is much room for improvement in the manner in which the ball frame is used. Writing often was very good, but at many of the small schools children are asked to form too many letters in one lesson, and they are left too much to themselves, the consequence being scribbling, with little or no attention to lines. It is very important that there should be a well advanced primer class if a good First Standard is to be obtained the following year. A reading book might well be used—Nelson's Queen Infants' Reader and Queen Primers for choice—for then children would probably pick up something at home as well as in school; and little ones generally take some interest in a book, especially if it is well illustrated. On account of the necessarily very varied attainments of these preparatory classes the teacher of a small school is placed at a great disadvantage as compared with the teacher of a larger school. In the latter school the children enter the class preparing for Standard I. well grounded in their work, while in the former they are little more advanced than what are technically known as "infants."

Standard Classes.—In Reading I find, on comparing the percentages for the two years, a considerable improvement this year in Standard III., a marked decline in Standard V., and very similar results in the other standards. The misuse of the aspirate is becoming very common in this district. At several schools children read in such a low tone that it was a matter of great difficulty to hear what they were reading, even though the passages treated were well known to me. With a view to obtain improvement in this respect, I have for some considerable time recommended teachers to place their pupils standing at the back of the desks during the reading lessons. The explanation of the subject-matter of the reading lessons is still in a great many schools very poor. This lack of comprehension on the part of the pupils is in a great measure due to weak teaching and to a bad style of questioning. Thus, instead of requiring pupils to give in their own words in full statements the meanings of phrases, of clauses, or of sentences, as recommended year after year, too much attention is given to single words such as are found at the end of the lesson, and which a pupil would probably be quite unable to embody in sentences if asked to do so.