

also be led to use dictionaries. The tendency nowadays appears to be to make the paths of learning far too smooth and pleasant for the pupil, and the consequence is that when he gets out into the world he feels for a time quite at sea because his big brother, the teacher, is not by to tide him over any little difficulty that may arise. In the preparatory classes at many schools the phonic system of spelling is well taught.

In *Composition* the letter-writing was sometimes good, and properly-ended letters are now much more common than they used to be. Too often, however, the writers dealt at far too great a length with one trivial incident connected with the subject given, and ignored the chief points. Pupils should be trained first to pick out the principal interesting facts in a subject, and then to write a brief outline concerning them. As has been already mentioned under the heading "Spelling," mutual correction should be encouraged. Paraphrasing generally was very moderate.

*Grammar* has now been a class-subject for two years in Standards III., V., and VI. In our last annual report we pointed out that "the subject showed a woful falling off in Standards V. and VI." We regret to have to say that this year there was no improvement in the two highest Standards. In Standard III., however, the work was much better than in 1892, and the number of schools is gradually increasing in which intelligent methods of teaching grammar in this class and in Standard IV. prevail. Both at inspection visits and at examination visits we frequently pointed out to teachers that they should insist upon their pupils stating the functions of words before attempting to classify such words into parts of speech, and that a similar course should be pursued in the higher standards with regard to phrases and clauses. The results of the teachers' efforts have been gratifying in Standards III. and IV., but we would here point out that the function of a word should be stated *fully* with regard to its context in the sentence, and not merely a definition given, as "stating word."

Oral examination was frequently adopted in Standard III., and with good results. In a few smaller schools Standards V. and VI. also were examined orally, but the results were quite as unsatisfactory as the paper work at many other schools.

In Standard IV.—the only class in which grammar is a pass-subject—the work was comparatively far superior to that in Standards V. and VI. The syllabus for this class might well be amended in the direction of requiring from the pupils some knowledge of the parts of a sentence, even if some inflexions have to be sacrificed.

With regard to *Arithmetic*, it is difficult to write anything that would be applicable to the district as a whole, so much does the work vary at different schools. In a fair proportion of the schools the subject is well taught, but at some the results are very poor indeed. One thing we are pleased to be able to state: that at a large number of schools the work is put down in very nice style, with the various steps clearly set out, on slates or paper according to class. Training of this kind must have a very good effect. Mental arithmetic is generally most unsatisfactory.

*Writing* on the whole is a strong subject. The slate writing in Standards I. and II. was often particularly fine, as also the transcription on paper in Standard III. In very few schools had fault to be found with the transcription in the higher standards.

*Drawing* was on the whole very satisfactory. The system of requiring pupils to draw their copies in the presence of the Inspectors on examination days has done much to improve the quality of the work, and has amply repaid the extra time and trouble involved. Freehand drawing was very good, some remarkably creditable work being shown by even pupils in the lower standards. Scale drawing also was highly satisfactory, pupils, even girls, showing great interest in it, and obtaining an intelligent grasp of the principles such as ought to prove of considerable service to many of them after they leave school. In plane geometry only the easier problems were required to be worked as tests at the examination, and, taking into account the fact that such tests were given for the first time, the work was very fair. The application of scale drawing to geometrical problems from the outset is, however, somewhat confusing to the pupil just entering upon a course of geometry. The study of solid geometry in Standard VI. has not proved satisfactory, and with few exceptions the tests resulted in such lamentable failures that we decided to abandon them, and to remain satisfied with an examination of the books, and with getting the pupils to work the problems with the aid of the instructions and drawings in the books. Model drawing also was generally poor. Neither solid geometry nor model drawing can be satisfactory until the schools are supplied with the models and the planes of projection referred to in the syllabus.

With regard to the knowledge about form and relations of lines and simple geometrical figures required in Standards I., II., and III., where the forms, &c., were taught with the aid of drawings and concrete examples the children showed not only an intelligent grasp of the subject but also an eager interest in it. At many schools the figures to be studied have been drawn on large sheets of calico or paper, which are placed on the walls or map-stands before the classes. Several teachers, however, might remember that it is useless having formal definitions committed to memory before the figures they describe have been illustrated in such a manner as to bring out their various properties. Concrete examples should be shown, and the children should be required to draw their own examples, to cut them out in cardboard or tin, to put them together with sticks, &c.

It is to be regretted that a few teachers are in the habit of making very wild statements about the geometrical drawing requirements in Standards I., II., III., and IV.—*e.g.*, "Young children are supposed to know the six books of Euclid." As a consequence, some of the public have run away with extraordinary and quite erroneous ideas, and, worse still, the pupils themselves are imbued with the utterly false notion that they are attempting and even mastering work which would really be beyond their powers were it not for the exceptional cleverness of all concerned. As to the requirements in the lower three standards, they are valuable not only as a preparation for the more advanced work in the higher classes, but because it is important that even very young children should have clear ideas about *form*. That children taught in a sensible manner found no difficulty with the work we have already pointed out. Some of the names required appear no doubt to the uninitiated very formidable, but it is well known to those engaged in educational work that children