

sented and 727 passed. Owing to the number of children who, for reasons given in our last report, were not then promoted in the standards, the average age this year in most standards is about four months higher. We consider the results as to number (84 per cent.) and quality of passes satisfactory as a whole; but improvement will be looked for in certain schools, at least in certain sections of the work.

We have for several years classed the schools for comparison of results, and we shall continue the practice, as it must be apparent to all that the same proportion and quality of passes cannot be looked for in schools of disproportionate size.

Of the ten largest schools in Class A of the appendix* to this report, all but one have improved in working condition; and the improvement in two of them, which last year were below average merit, is very marked.

The results of many of the nineteen important schools in Class B were fairly good, and in many cases commendable; and, although in some cases there were weak points here and there which we trust will be set right before next examination, there is no school which is altogether unsatisfactory. The low results of the Upper Hutt School are due to the closing of the school for nearly two months; and a change in the management at Pahiataua temporarily affected that school.

Of the twenty-four schools in Class C, which are large enough to require more than one teacher, most of them are doing good work. There have been changes in the management of eight of them; but only in one or two cases has the change been attended with any drawback.

In Class D are twenty-six schools under one teacher, with from fifty-nine to twenty-four on the books. These vary considerably in efficiency, but most of them are doing fairly satisfactory work.

In Class E are eighteen aided schools, showing still greater disparity in their conditions and state of efficiency, and three of them are decidedly weak.

The infant schools and infant departments in large schools are working well; and new kindergarten occupations, more musical drill, and better wall-furniture are features of our best rooms. Much of the kindergarten material is now made by the pupils or their teachers, especially in the Masterton infant department. Mrs. Francis, of the Mount Cook Infant School, and Miss Page, of the Thorndon infant department, are specially commended for the efforts made by them to fully furnish their schools; and these teachers, together with Miss Watson, of the Te Aro Infant School, and Miss Parsons, of the Clyde Quay infant department, are doing excellent work as teachers of class-singing. Many other teachers are doing good work in these directions.

Here we may report that the effect of Mr. Parker's work in the training of teachers in singing is apparent in all our larger schools, and in many smaller ones. Whereas, before his classes were begun, the class-singing in many large schools was taught by one of the staff only, if one could be found who possessed sufficient musical skill and confidence, now many of the junior teachers are able to take their own classes in the subject, and most of our head-teachers are competent directors.

In reading, spelling, composition, and recitation the quality of the work is satisfactory, and generally improving. Little formal grammar is now required by departmental regulations, but the parsing and analysis of sentences is hardly so well done as in former years, when grammar was a pass-subject. As year by year the composition shows considerable improvement, there is a probable gain on the whole by the change. We would, however, remind teachers who are remiss in this matter that it is quite easy to meet all requirements, and that the teaching of analysis, as low down in the school as the Third Standard, is the best aid to composition; and a knowledge of the true functions of the several parts of speech is both useful and educative, and invaluable to pupils who go forward to secondary work.

On the subject of the extension of reading matter we are pleased to report that several of the largest schools and a few smaller ones are using three class reading-books; and the use of two such books is becoming general. We have so often tried to impress upon teachers and School Committees the importance of this that it is quite gratifying to find the need is now recognised, although the practice is still far from general. The recent issue of several very suitable books mentioned in our "Suggestions to Teachers" should further encourage the movement.

In many schools handwriting is much improved—chiefly because a round, bold, and more upright form of letters has generally commended itself to teachers. We recommend the general use of the newer style of copybooks.

In many of our largest schools drawing is in advance of departmental requirements, and it is undesirable that more time should be given to this subject in such schools. It is, however, very desirable that no pressure should be exercised, and that pupils should not be presented for first-grade freehand sooner than on the point of presentment for Standard V. In any other subject twenty per cent. of failures would indicate no great success, but failures in freehand for several years past have reached forty per cent. This arises from the needless presentation of candidates in Standards III. and IV., thus causing unnecessary trouble to the examiner, useless waste of paper, and considerable needless disappointment to the unfortunate examinees. On investigation we find that much of the disappointment in freehand results is due to want of proportion in the figure drawn rather than to crudeness of lining. The first-grade passes this year, as compared with last year, are thus stated:—

Year.	Freehand.	Geometry.	Scale.	Model.
1895	777	1,263	689	387
1894	711	1,233	613	326
Increase	66	30	76	61

* Not reprinted. The schools are classified as follows: Class A, ten schools, each presenting over 300 children; Class B, nineteen schools, each presenting from 100 to 300 children; Class C, twenty-four schools, each with less than 100 children, taught by more than one teacher; Class D, twenty-six schools, each with only one teacher; Class E, eighteen aided schools; Class F, three infant schools.