

The quality of the freehand drawing was below fair in eight schools; it was fair in thirty-one; and good to very good in twenty-six. The drawing was judged in almost every school by exercises done during my visit; and they were generally best done in schools where the children, after completing the copies in one of the usual drawing-books, had practised the work in plain books from copies set on the blackboard. The boys of Standard IV. had prepared the geometrical problems and entered them in their books, and in most of the schools they were able to work them out before me on the blackboard. Geometrical drawing and drawing to scale in Standard V. were usually well done; and many of the boys of Standard VI. had a good understanding of the principles of solid drawing. The weakest part of the work was model-drawing, which was well taught in only one or two schools. Several times it has come under my notice that one kind of drawing is taken up for the earlier part of the year, generally the freehand; and when the freehand books are filled the geometrical, solid, or model are gone on with. This practice should be discontinued; the different kinds of drawing should be carried on alternately right through the year.

Taking everything into account, I think the results in arithmetic this year have been creditable to the teachers and the scholars. In many of the schools the teachers of Standards I. and II. have taken special care in the training of their scholars to readiness and accuracy in computation by frequent oral practice in "tots"; and in some schools the children run up the lines of addition with wonderful rapidity. Much remains to be done in this and in other ways in the lower standards to lay a sure foundation for the work of the higher classes. Whether the pupils can solve problems becomes the main test of the skill of the teacher and the ability of the pupils of Standards IV. to VI.; and it is imperative that there should be the greatest expertness in adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing, so that when the way of doing has been mastered, the doing should be quick and sure. Knowing full well that arithmetic presents difficulties of a very real kind to most children, teachers are seriously to blame when they add to these difficulties by employing cumbrous methods and by passing over slovenliness in the figuring and in the setting down of the successive steps in the process of working. Those teachers that insist on neatness and clearness of arrangement find in the greater success of their scholars a reward for the trouble they have taken.

Composition continues to improve in Standards III. and IV., the improvement being most marked in the latter; but there is not a corresponding advance in the quality of the work in Standards V. and VI. It is more than probable that the unsatisfactory condition into which the treatment of grammar has fallen will largely account for this; for it is certain that most of the children have not the advantage of being brought up in an atmosphere of correct speech, and must therefore depend on a knowledge of grammar for accurate writing.

In geography there is a percentage of passes of 86. Many of the teachers take great pains to make the lessons interesting and impressive; and in their teaching good use is made of blank maps and the blackboard.

In all the class-subjects, except grammar, it was not uncommon to find very good work done; in grammar it was most exceptional.

For recitation, drill, and singing, which take rank as additional subjects, praise was frequently bestowed. A few more schools have taken to the use of rods, Indian clubs, and dumb-bells for physical exercises; and the military drill of the boys in the four largest schools is very satisfactory. There are still seventeen schools where singing is not taught. The mark for needlework seldom falls below good, and in the majority of the schools it is very good.

At a few of our country schools the children have flower-gardens which they tend under the supervision of the teacher. As each child has his own little plot to look after, the consciousness of ownership and security of tenure is an encouragement to industry; and pleasant rivalry in the taste and skill with which the gardens are kept is engendered. I am pleased to state that many of the teachers take pride in having their own gardens well kept, and are careful to see that the school grounds are in good order.

The order and discipline of the schools were generally satisfactory, and I have seldom had to find fault with the manners and general behaviour of the pupils.

I have, &c.,

JAS. GIBSON GOW, M.A., Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, South Canterbury.

APPENDIX.

EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

Standard Classes.				Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Passed.	Average Age of those that passed.
							Yrs. mos.
Above Standard VI.	...	...	...	8	...	...	...
Standard VI.	...	...	...	29	28	18	14 9
" V.	...	...	...	53	52	28	13 5
" IV.	...	...	...	84	80	54	12 6
" III.	...	...	...	100	99	77	11 6
" II.	...	...	...	106	102	93	10 2
" I.	...	...	...	94	89	85	9 6
Preparatory	...	...	...	257	...	...	...
Totals	...	...	...	731	450	355	11 11*

* Mean average age.