

APPENDIX C.

ALTERNATIVE SYLLABUS OF INSTRUCTION IN ELEMENTARY DAY-SCHOOLS.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

THIS syllabus is framed on somewhat different lines to the syllabus hitherto in use, and is not intended to supersede the latter, but merely to provide an alternative course of instruction for such schools as choose to adopt it.

The principles on which this alternative syllabus is founded are a development, adapted to the needs of older scholars, of methods with which teachers are already familiar in the infant-school.*

A leading feature in this syllabus is the introduction of drawing at arm's length. Where there are facilities as regards room, &c., this will be best done by scholars standing in front of their slates or boards, which should be fixed in a nearly upright position. In schools where this cannot be arranged the scholars should sit as far back as possible, leaning against the desk behind, with slate or board propped nearly upright on the desk, and at arm's length from the scholar, who should work freely from the shoulder, never touching the slate or board with the wrist or more of the hand than the top joint of the little finger. The slate or board must not be turned about, nor the position of the body shifted in order to draw curves or lines in various directions. These remarks do not, however, apply to brush-work or drawing with instruments.

The possible close connection of the present course of drawing with other modes of teaching in the schools should not be lost sight of. For example, at many points a good teacher may find it possible to use this course as a basis for hand-and-eye training in other suitable material; while the introduction of each new form—*e.g.*, the egg-form, Standards I. and II.—may be suitably connected with object-lessons or stories on familiar objects which suggest that form.

The forms produced and their combinations will naturally suggest decorative and natural shapes, and it should be the object of the teacher to develop this association of ideas.

The materials required will be (1) slates, with chalks, white or coloured, or soft composition slate-pencil, or, where this is practicable, small blackboards or pieces of blackened millboard with chalks and a damp sponge or rag; (2) cartridge-paper and pencils; (3) camel's hair brush, and one or more water-colours.

Nothing in this syllabus must be taken to imply that importance is not to be attached to accuracy and care in the execution of the work herein suggested.

STANDARDS I. AND II.

(a.) Production and Combination of Curved Freehand Forms.

The primary object is to give control of the hand, and the first exercise is to let the scholars work, as described above, with free arm from the shoulder, sweeping round and round with slight pressure on the slate or board. Gradually, as control of the hand is acquired, the scholar will be able to draw the lines round and round in the same track. In this way, from beginning with indefinite forms, more or less definite forms will be arrived at, of which the ellipse (Fig. 1, p. 104) may be taken as an example. This "whole form" is selected by the teacher as a suitable foundation. It can be developed in two directions—(a) the closed curve bounded by a single line (Fig. 4, p. 104), and (b) the mass or surface bounded by a curved line, but filled up (Fig. 4, p. 104). Both these whole forms should afterwards be produced with every variety of direction, size, combination of numbers (both of equal and unequal sizes), and conditions as to position. The combinations will suggest natural or simple decorative forms.

Similarly, the egg-shape may be taken. This new form will then be treated in all varieties of position, size, and combinations, as in the case of the ellipse. The interest and variety of the combinations and resulting patterns will be increased by the use of coloured chalks or tints of colour.

No attempt is made to analyse these whole forms into their elements at this stage.

(b.) Straight-line Forms.

The straight line should be first produced to connect two dots at a single stroke, which may be repeated backwards and forwards several times at first to acquire power; then in all varieties of length and direction—horizontal, vertical, &c.; then in combinations so as to produce simple figures, such as squares, oblongs, and triangles, and suggestions of simple decorative and common forms.

(c.) Drawing from Memory.

Drawing from memory may be introduced at this stage, the teacher selecting such objects outside the schools as a pillar post-box, a lamp-post, a haystack, a scythe, or a spade, or occasion-

* The following passages in a circular on the subject (Education Department, Circular 322, 6th February, 1893) may be noted:—

"Two leading principles should be regarded as a sound basis for the education of early childhood: (1) The recognition of the child's spontaneous activity, and the stimulation of this activity in certain well-defined directions by the teachers; (2) the harmonious and complete development of the whole of a child's faculties. The teacher should pay especial regard to the love of movement, which can alone secure healthy physical conditions; to the observant use of the organs of sense, especially those of sight and touch; and to that eager desire of questioning which intelligent children exhibit. All these should be encouraged under due limitations, and should be developed simultaneously, so that each stage of development may be complete in itself. . . . You should direct the attention of teachers to the chief consideration which underlies true methods of infant-teaching, viz., the association of one lesson with another through some one leading idea or ideas."

The development of the above principles in the lower standards of schools for older scholars is dealt with in Circular 332 (Education Department, 6th January, 1894).