

Class-subjects.

Grammar.	History.	Object-lessons and Science.	Mental Arithmetic.	Mean Percentage.
55 per cent. Fair.	61 per cent. Satisfactory.	60 per cent. Satisfactory.	49 per cent. Weak.	52.25 per cent. Fair.

Additional Subjects.

Recitation.	Drill and Exercises.	Singing.	Needlework.	Comprehension.	Mean Percentage.
68 per cent. Good.	68 per cent. Good.	59 per cent. Fair.	72 per cent. Good.	60 per cent. Satisfactory.	64.25 per cent. Satisfactory.

In 1898 the mean of all the subjects was 62; in 1897, a more favourable year, it was 65.

The difference between the standard-pass percentage mark, 88, and the efficiency percentage mark, 63, is very striking, and to the lay mind must be puzzling. It is easily accounted for. A child may pass a standard, failing wholly in one pass-subject, gaining only 60 per cent. of the marks in the other pass-subjects, and doing poorly in the class and additional subjects. He may, therefore, and often does, pass on a very low percentage of the marks attainable. At a time, too, when, as during the last two years, children undergo examination while in the incipient stages of sickness or while recovering from sickness, it is plainly the duty of the Inspector to take these circumstances into account and not to withhold the pass if it is nearly won. Accordingly, during the last two years we have, in cases where the child was obviously suffering from temporary incapacity, awarded the pass even though it was not quite earned by marks. This has tended to swell the standard-pass percentage; but it has not affected the efficiency mark, which mark is invariably the percentage ratio of the marks attained by the schools to those actually attainable. It is, we consider, a very accurate index of the degree of attainment that the children gave proof of possessing at the time of examination. It is not so high as we could wish, but it is as high as could reasonably be expected in a school year so short and so broken by inroads of sickness.

It will be observed that Tables A and B take no note of order, attention, and manners—important ethical sides of school life. They are omitted from Table B only because they are not classed as “subjects” in the standards of instruction. We regard them as of the highest importance, observe them with great care during our examination and inspection, and assign them efficiency marks of the same range as those of the standard subjects. These marks are generally high, often very high, and go to swell the total that determines the general efficiency mark of the school. On the basis of all the marks we classify the schools as follows: Weak, 5; fair, 27; satisfactory, 96; good, 86; very good, 2.

Eighty-eight schools, exclusive of district high schools, presented an X class (the class above Standard VI.); but five of these had done little or no work beyond that of Standard VI. The following shows the classification of the others according to the character of their work as disclosed by examination: Weak, 20; fair, 19; satisfactory, 19; good to very good, 25. To get “fair” a class must win at least 50 per cent. of marks; to get “satisfactory” at least 60 per cent. of marks; and to get “good” or “very good” from 68 to 80 per cent. of marks; and Table D shows that 53 per cent. of the schools gained from 60 to 80 per cent. of marks, and that 76 per cent. of them gained from 50 to 80 per cent. of marks. There is not, we think, much reason for dissatisfaction with this result. In a large number of schools with a class above Standard VI. there is but one teacher, who has to teach the preparatory class, six standard classes, and the class above Standard VI. In such cases the work of the class above Standard VI. is done under highly disadvantageous circumstances, the teacher snatching a minute or two whenever he can to assist or direct the pupils, but doing most of the actual teaching before and after ordinary school-hours. The presence of this class in a country school obviously entails, where the subjects are efficiently taught, a large amount of extra work to the teacher, and such work, if efficiently done, should, we think, carry with it extra pay. To encourage advanced education in schools remote from high schools, the Education Department might well double the grant for pupils who have passed the highest standard and are efficiently instructed in work of more advanced character than that provided for in the public-school syllabus. The district high schools are only elementary schools with an advanced department, for instruction in which fees are charged to parents, and to which an extra grant is made by the Board. Schools with a class above Standard VI. are also elementary schools with an advanced department. Why should fees be chargeable in the one case and not in the other? and why should the one and not the other receive an extra grant? To the former is given an extra grant with power to charge fees, to the latter no extra grant and no power to charge fees. Why this difference in the conditions of institutions of the same kind? We do not grudge the high schools their privileges. On the contrary, we wish they and their privileges could be multiplied; but we contend that all schools that are similar in kind should enjoy similar privileges, that, in fact, since provision is made in the one class of school for increased payment for instruction in secondary subjects, provision should also be made for increased payment for the