

proficiency attained are such as to develop with the maturity of coming years something more worthy of the name of good penmanship. We often have reason to direct the teacher's attention to the necessity of enforcing much more strictly the well-understood rules of posture and finger-position; beyond this we have no criticism to make, and generally we believe that our schools treat the subject on the right lines, and with a substantial measure of success.

Composition: The practice in this subject usually occupies three half-hours weekly, and in method and result varies much according to the skill and natural bent of the teacher. In the exercises of the individual pupils a further variation as fully pronounced coincides in a large measure with what may be termed the social status of the pupil and the habit of reading acquired. If the pupils read for themselves, or are happy enough to have in their homes an intelligent environment, the teaching of composition is a pleasant and easy task; otherwise it is anything but easy, and in many instances must find such satisfaction as it can in an attainment the merits of which consist mainly in the absence of gross technical blunders. In the larger schools, where in the main the methods of treatment adopted are best, we should in most cases like to see more done in the direction of leading up to written composition by oral exercises at the earlier stages, and in the co-ordination of the practice of the several standards, so as to secure a better gradation and a more systematic development.

Arithmetic: In arithmetic we find a greater divergence between the estimate formed by the head-teacher and the actual performance of the pupil in the presence of the Inspector than is met with in other subjects. For arithmetic the school time-table generally provides at least six hours and a half weekly—more than double the time spent in reading—and we have considerable doubt whether the result in the educational benefit to the children is commensurate with the sacrifice thus made on its behalf. Five hours weekly would probably be ample to give the necessary oral practice and fix principles in the minds of the pupils, provided that the limits of the work required in the three upper classes were set out with more precise indications of the range of practice.

Among class-subjects geography and drawing, which are now transferred to this group, retain nearly everywhere the characteristics they acquired as pass-subjects. The time given to them has been just the same, the nature of the instruction has not differed, and the result is practically identical. In merit—of the kind produced by the special line adopted—they stand first in the class group, and we hope they will continue to occupy no less prominent a position in the minds of the teachers. In geography, however, it is clear that both the programme and the method of treatment require substantial amendments to secure fully the benefits expected to be gained from the release of the subject from pass conditions, and in drawing a variety of development, having a closer bearing on nature-knowledge and marking more distinctly the teacher's individualities of taste and aptitude, would be welcomed.

On grammar we have already given our views pretty fully, and we have now nothing to add beyond the expression of a desire to see during the coming year a material improvement in the prescribed arrangements.

Under the head of science and object-lessons, we may again recommend to the notice of teachers the very great importance of co-ordinating the work of the classes to a greater extent than is at present the rule, and the paramount value of an intimate connection of the lessons with the realm of nature-knowledge within the possible experience of the children.

In handwork our larger schools have already (as for some years past) much to show of an attractive kind in a variety of infant occupations of unquestionably good educational value; occupations of a similar character are also in most cases extended to the First Standard classes, and in some supply useful practice in the Second. For work in the upper standards two or three of our country schools, in which the masters have a special taste and skill in this direction, furnish good examples. In the city the woodwork classes of the Normal School, and the cookery lessons of the School of Domestic Instruction, now attended by a large number of girls belonging to the upper classes of town and suburban schools, provide so far the chief opportunities our children have of practical instruction.

We have, &c.,

L. B. WOOD, M.A.,
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The Chairman, North Canterbury Education Board.

Classes.			Presented.	Present.	Passed.	Average Ages of Pupils in each Class.
						Yrs. mos.
Standard VII.	...	...	311	210	...	...
" VI.	...	...	1,529	1,458	1,194	13 9
" V.	...	...	2,203	2,121	1,621	12 10
" IV.	...	...	2,682	2,575	2,063	11 11
" III.	...	...	2,806	2,713	2,133	10 10
" II.	...	...	2,391	2,342	2,099	9 8
" I....	...	...	2,170	2,133	2,022	8 6
Preparatory...	...	...	5,926	5,180	...	...
Totals	...	...	20,018	18,732	11,132	11 3*

* Mean of average age.