

centage of schools in the district in which the subject was deemed by us to have been treated with satisfactory results.

		Standard VI. Per Cent.	Standard V. Per Cent.	Standard IV. Per Cent.	Standard III. Per Cent.
In 1906	..	.. 37	35	58	74
In 1905	..	.. 72	43	61	81

In Standard I the subject was usually taken orally by us, and we were pleased to notice signs of considerable improvement. The reserve in answering, which is too often in evidence, might to a great extent be broken down by dealing freely with well-known subjects and with events of everyday occurrence in the life of the children. A skilful handling of the composition, especially in its early stages, is a distinct call on the resourcefulness of the teacher.

In Standard II very commendable progress was evident.

From Standards III to VI we used the tests supplied by the Education Department, supplemented for the last question by an essay or letter on some familiar topic, or reproduction of a story read.

In Standard III we found the tests referred to as being somewhat easy, the pupils on the whole finding but little difficulty with the cards. Nevertheless the figures we give indicate a rather lower state of efficiency. This is accounted for by a more searching test in the essay, the subjects for which were as a rule taken from the course in nature study.

In Standard IV the percentage of satisfactory schools remains much the same as it was last year.

Coming now to Standards V and VI a very considerable drop is noticeable. The greatest weakness still exists in Standard V, which stands at a very low figure, only 35 per cent. of the schools being considered satisfactory.

In both of these classes the essay-writing was quite up to the usual standard of efficiency, but there was a very general breakdown in the part of the work dealing with sentence-structure and grammar from the tests provided by the Education Department.

Much difficulty arose from the form in which these cards were set, the chief, as far as came under our notice, being—(1) the undue length of questions; (2) too numerous directions and hints, which seemed to create confusion rather than conduce to clearness; (3) many of the questions dealing with the synthesis of sentences contained too many clauses to enable them to be readily combined even by persons of mature intelligence. While recognising difficulties like the above we think a great deal more requires to be done in training pupils to a fuller knowledge of the functions of phrases and clauses. No better means to this end can be suggested than a systematic use of the ordinary school reading-book, abounding in examples only waiting to be taken advantage of. With the exclusion of formal grammar from the syllabus it would seem that there has been a great tendency to ignore grammatical usages and constructions of all kinds.

Oral composition has been practised very generally, but in a somewhat indiscriminate manner. Regarding this division of the subject we quote as follows from "English Code Suggestions": "Oral composition is at the foundation of teaching in English. Practice in speaking English, whether incidental or systematic, should be directed upon four distinct objects: (1) Readiness and fluency; (2) clearness of utterance; (3) taste; (4) grammatical accuracy." If in the teaching of this subject these aims were kept in view much good would result both in the spoken and in the written language.

WRITING.—This subject is on the whole very satisfactorily taught, for though in our estimate few schools (seventeen in all) receive high commendation the number of inefficients is decreasing considerably and is relatively small. We are always looking for improvement and so apt to think that the standard attained is not a high one, but a comparison with the work of the private schools this year—over which we have no jurisdiction—is flattering, for we find that not one of them can compare favourably with our better-class public schools in penmanship, although in drawing two of them excelled. Collins' Graphic (Semi-Upright) is the copy-book now most commonly employed, though some teachers adhere to Jackson's Vertical. In the higher numbers an attempt is now being made to supply business forms, but it is still a matter for regret that the series is not exactly on the prescribed lines, and in the transcription papers teachers are not always careful enough to supply the missing links.

For a school to gain a name for good writing—that is, to have the majority of its scholars good writers—is the result of the well-sustained efforts of years rather than of one year, of strict discipline, and of persistent correction. An eye for form combined with good control may work wonders, but if one judged solely from the way in which mistakes in dictation are marked by some teachers the first essential must sometimes be lacking. The control should be such as to insure the correct position of holding the pen and proper posture of the body at all writing-exercises.

ARITHMETIC.—Judged by the results of the tests applied this subject has again made a distinct advance, the number of schools doing satisfactory work in every class being for the first time for some years in the majority, fifty-seven to fifty. Last year the numbers were on the other side of the dividing line, fifty-six to fifty-eight. In all classes 67 per cent. of those examined by us would, according to our standard (usually half-marks), have qualified for promotion, as against 60 per cent. last year, and 53 per cent. previously. The percentage of individual successes in the different standard classes was as follows:—

	Standard VI.	Standard V.	Standard IV.	Standard III.	Standard II.	Standard I.
1906	67	60	66	77	79	56
1905	45	54	64	78	81	56

Improvement is most noticeable in Standards VI and V. The work in Standard I is not yet entirely satisfactory. In the Preparatory classes progress is being made on the new lines of work, but many teachers would do well to ponder carefully the directions given in last year's report. A little book, "How to teach Arithmetic," by Levi Seeley (Kellog and Co., New York), would probably also