

examinations are based will in schools of the same grade have a somewhat similar range, and this may remove some of the difficulties that beset the teacher in displaying, and the Inspector in exploring, the chaotic labyrinth that too often at present represents the scheme of work.

A summary of the opinions we have expressed concerning the efficiency of our schools is as follows: Good to excellent, 1; good, 18; satisfactory to good, 25; satisfactory, 42; efficient, 86; fair to satisfactory, 13; fair, 6; moderate to fair, 1; inefficient, 20.

Before making any comments upon or criticism of the treatment which the different subjects of the syllabus receive, the following tables, showing for the schools of the district our estimate of the quality of the work in each of the compulsory subjects, is submitted for reference:—

	Excellent.	Good to Excel- lent.	Good.	Satisfactory to Good.	Satisfactory.	Efficient.	Fair to Satisfac- tory.	Fair.	Moderate Fair.	Moderate.	Inferior to Moderate.	Inferior.	Subjects not ex- amined or not required.	Subjects not taught.	Non-Efficient.
Reading	6	6	78	90	8	7	..	..	..	..	1	..	16
Composition	..	1	6	4	42	54	19	26	3	2	1	..	1	..	52
Writing	11	10	65	86	14	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	20
Spelling	..	3	22	7	30	64	9	19	7	5	1	1	..	..	42
Recitation	..	1	24	12	63	100	..	4	..	..	..	..	2	..	6
Arithmetic	9	7	41	57	10	20	5	13	..	1	..	..	49
Drawing	25	17	41	85	9	9	..	2	..	..	1	..	21
Singing	19	10	42	72	11	8	1	3	..	..	6	5	34
Physical instruction	..	5	24	16	50	95	5	2	..	1	..	..	3	..	11
Geography	2	3	14	19	37	38	3	6	1	..	2	..	87
History	8	12	26	46	10	10	1	3	1	..	35	..	60
Moral instruction	5	6	89	100	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	3

ENGLISH.—Under this head are embraced reading, recitation, spelling, writing, and composition. Of these, reading and composition are both necessary for promotion in English, which determines the standard class to which the child belongs. To express the matter in terms still very commonly employed, no child can be placed in a higher standard class unless he has passed the head teacher's examination in reading and composition. The Royal Crown Readers are usually chosen as text-books, with the Imperial series as second readers. The *School Journal* has come into more general use during the past year, in many instances being taken as the second reader. Though perhaps too much to expect, it would be of decided advantage were the issue made in six different parts instead of three as at present, so that the grades would be better suited to the requirements of the different standard classes. Difficulty was sometimes experienced in finding at a school enough of the *Journals* for the class to read from, as many of the teachers had ignored our very definite instructions *re* filing them for reperusal. By some the *Journals* had been used as extra or third readers, in some cases wisely, but in others merely nominally. Additional reading-matter brought before the attention of the pupils, if merely given as rewards to encourage silent reading, will, especially if the scholars are skilfully lead to obtain a thorough comprehension of the language, increase the vocabulary and develop the intelligence, with a directly beneficial bearing upon the composition and the child's knowledge of English. For silent reading, a much neglected practice, simple stories and fairy tales, of which many cheap publications are now being issued, may be also utilised in the manner suggested.

Though in our valuation of the reading we have not accorded so much praise as was given last year, we are as a rule very well satisfied with the fluency, accuracy, and expression displayed by the pupils. We cannot help reiterating that still closer attention should in the junior classes be given to correct phrasing, and in the senior to the thorough explanation of the passage read, especially of the poetry. Such explanation should be so interestingly given, or the meaning reduced, that the child may be able to grasp the sense readily and intelligently, and form true mental pictures of the ideas suggested in the words before him. A reading lesson might ever be attractive and fascinating to the child, and, like recitation, a source of pleasure, not of pain and nauseating disgust, to the hearer. The repetition of verse has further improved, having been marked satisfactory in 100 schools, good in twenty-four of these, and excellent in one. We were pleased to note that some children in the lower standards displayed gleams of dramatic force, a faculty which apparently is not developed proportionately with years. Where faults existed, the most common, besides lack of thoroughness in preparation, as betrayed by some of the pupils in a class being ignorant of the verse (possibly the result of irregularity), was the tendency of the reciter to attempt to deliver his soul of its burden as rapidly as possible, to the detriment of phrasing, modulation, and expression.

With the allowance now granted by the Department for the purchase of text-books for Standards II, I, and P., we suggest obtaining a supply of New Zealand Graphic Readers, so that, with the *School Journal* to use as a second reader, the parents may be spared the necessity for providing any reading-books for children in those classes. It will be necessary, we consider, to restrict the use of books on free issue to the schoolroom, and they could then be expected to last two years. In the second year text-books in other subjects could be procured, and the children in those classes would then have the full benefit of free school-books. In those schools at which the children are already supplied at their own cost with new or second-hand Crown or Imperial