

Owing to pressure of work some thirty primary schools, chiefly in the northern part of the district, received only one visit. Our estimate of the efficiency of the primary schools (Marlborough Ward not included) in the several groups of subjects is shown in the following table:—

Subject.	Number of Schools.			
	Weak.	Fair to Very Fair.	Satisfactory to Very Satisfactory.	Good to Very Good.
English	1	22	92	22
Arithmetic	8	24	69	36
Drawing and handwork	2	6	71	58
Class subjects	3	28	65	41

Of the class subjects there is a decided improvement in history and in political geography, such improvement being due probably to the great interest created by the war.

The true position of handwork in a scheme of education is gradually receiving greater recognition at the hands of the teachers. The woodwork of S5 and S6 is now more popular than formerly, and work ranging from satisfactory to good has been done at the different centres. The senior instructor in woodwork who visits these centres from time to time reports that "Good efficient work has been done throughout the year in the fifty-seven primary and nine secondary classes."

Nature-study and practical gardening constitute the science of most of the small country schools, and in work of this class satisfactory progress is being made. In the larger country schools a more advanced programme in elementary agriculture is adopted. A three-years programme has been drawn up to combine experimental work inside the school with practical work in the garden. The senior instructor in agriculture reports, "The course has been working for three years and has proved very satisfactory."

In addition to the science programme lessons in health and temperance have been given regularly during the year.

The exhibitions held in Wellington of needlework, &c., done by the children for patriotic purposes clearly show that, in general, the teaching of this subject is good. Without doubt the keen interest taken by all in work for our soldiers has given the teachers an opportunity which they have not been slow to make use of in improving the quality of such work. Hardly a school in the country has failed to forward some articles useful for the soldiers at the front, or for the orphaned children of Belgium.

During the year fifty-five primary classes (S5 and S6) have taken lessons in home science, including practical work in cookery, at the various centres; nineteen have taken lessons in laundry-work. This latter branch of the work will be extended during the year when the other centres for laundry-work are completely fitted up. The Marlborough Ward is excluded from these figures.

In the Marlborough Ward satisfactory progress has been made in reading, spelling, recitation, and writing. Arithmetic was generally good in the larger schools, but more attention should be given to mental arithmetic, which was decidedly weak in S6. A great improvement was noticeable in the composition of S6. The essays were greater in length, better arranged, and the punctuation satisfactory. Geography and history are being better taught, and the results of the oral examinations were generally satisfactory. Drawing varies in quality, but the blackboard drawing in coloured chalks was particularly good. Singing is receiving more attention, and in some of the larger schools good part singing was heard. Sight reading is neglected, and very little is known of the value of time signs or their names. In the Blenheim Technical School good progress has been made in the woodwork and the cookery classes. In the cookery class more attention has been given to the making of plain, useful dishes, and lessons in theory and economical methods have not been neglected. In the primary classes paper-work, carton-work, and modelling are favourite subjects, and in some schools, where the teacher has artistic tastes, excellent brush drawing was on exhibition.

Physical Instruction.—Marked progress is being made in the physical training now carried out in all our schools. The report of the physical instructors show that, in general, the work done is of a satisfactory character. The instructors, however, call attention to a few defects here and there, such as "want of attention to the fundamental position" when a class is under instruction, and the failure in some cases to use the tables so as to "ensure a gradual but steady and continuous progression in the teaching of physical exercises throughout the whole school life." Their reports, in general, confirm our report of last year, which we need not repeat. A few of the teachers have been content with giving the exercises once or twice a week, but their attention has been called to the fact that these exercises to be rendered valuable must be given daily.

In the Marlborough Ward the majority of the teachers have received some instruction in the new exercises as taught by the Physical Inspectors, and the result of the training is beginning to show itself. Children carry themselves better, and in the larger schools the exercises are of special merit. In some cases a carelessness in posture is noticed in the schoolroom. This should not be, as dual desks of the Zero type are now in all the Board schools. Organized games form part of the exercises, and in the larger centres swimming is regularly practised in the summer months.