

and brother, the former completely and the latter partially deaf. The girl had completed her education, and the boy had acquired a sufficient knowledge of lip-reading to enable him to return to the public school that he had been attending previously to his admission here. Exclusive of these two the average number of years under instruction of the pupils leaving was nine years, which in the case of deaf children is utterly inadequate.

Besides the ordinary school subjects the girls received training in dressmaking, cooking, laundrywork, and general housework, and the boys in woodwork and gardening. A class of fourteen boys also attended the Technical College at Christchurch for instruction in woodwork with very good results.

Applications have again been made for the admission of pupils at an earlier age than under present conditions the school is able to receive them. In view of the good results that have been obtained elsewhere by the early education of the young deaf children and of the general consensus of expert opinion on the subject, it is necessary to consider at as early a date as possible the opening of a preparatory school for young deaf children. When this is done it will be possible to commence the education of the deaf at an age more closely approximating to that at which hearing children learn to speak, and when the vocal organs are still plastic and the imitative faculties most active.

The medical inspection of schools has resulted in a large number of cases of defective speech and of defective hearing being brought to light. Where the two are associated it is probable that the defect in the hearing is such as to necessitate the case being received at this school for treatment. In cases where the speech does not appear to be defective and where the child appears to hear most of what is said to him it may be that if he is placed in a suitable position in the class-room—*i.e.*, in the centre of the front row—the child may be able to make satisfactory progress at an ordinary school. On the other hand, it is surprising how very serious deafness may go undetected for years, and what an extremely severe handicap to education even comparatively slight deafness is to a child, when taught in a public school, particularly in one where the classes are unusually large. Such a child, if mentally bright, usually picks up a certain amount of lip-reading, and by watching the teacher's face and the movements of the other children, combined with a skilful copying, may keep up with the work of the class, for a time to a surprising extent. Cases of more serious deafness allied with only average mental ability are often classed as mental defectives, and their deafness overlooked. Slightly deaf children are frequently thought by teachers to be wilfully inattentive, and punished accordingly. This, combined with the constant effort to catch indistinct sounds in noisy class-rooms, may set up a serious condition of nerve-strain, which may undermine the general health and further deteriorate the hearing of the child. The hearing of all such cases should be carefully tested by their teacher, and if it is found that, when occupying a position in the centre of the front row of the class, they are unable to distinguish what the teacher, when speaking in an ordinary tone, says, or that they cannot hear the children in other parts of the room speaking or reading, the necessity for special instruction at this school is indicated. Cases of defective speech or of stammering should also be reported.

The expenditure on the school for the last financial year is as follows:—

Salaries	£	3,981	
Maintenance of pupils and sundry expenses		1,858	
Travelling-expenses		228	
Maintenance of buildings, furnishings, &c.		70	
		—	6,137
Less—			
Parental contributions		1,339	
Amounts collected from Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards		1,363	
Sundry other recoveries		42	
		—	2,744
Net expenditure			<u>£3,393</u>

The net expenditure for the year 1916-17 was £4,277.