

**DISCIPLINE.**—This is generally good throughout the district. I noted only two small schools where it was decidedly bad, and two others where, though good in the upper, it was lax in the lower and infant classes. Laxity of discipline, especially in the lower classes, is very often the result of want of occupation, and in all small schools where there is no assistant I think it is better to dismiss the infant and primer classes half an hour before the other children. This would give the teacher an opportunity of imparting instruction to the upper classes in some important branch of the programme, with the advantage of quietness and freedom from distracting influences, while the little ones would come to their work in the afternoon all the fresher for their extra half-hour of recreation.

Organization in most of the larger schools is quite satisfactory. The work is carried on methodically, the changes are made rapidly, quietly, and regularly. In only one large school did I find it necessary to recommend a redistribution of the staff, which was not, in my opinion, being employed to the greatest advantage. I have since been informed by the head-master that the changes I recommended have been adopted with the most satisfactory results. In only one direction is there generally a falling-off in what is desirable, and that is in the tidiness of the disposal, not only of the scholars' books, &c., but in that of the contents of the masters' desks and cupboards. In very few cases is sufficient attention paid to this matter, nor is it at all an unimportant one. Habits of neatness and order are invaluable acquisitions, but, however much advocated in precept, if the teacher's desk exhibits a chaotic mass from which anything that may be wanted cannot be extracted without considerable loss of time, the children are not likely to pay much attention to a matter which the teacher appears to consider superfluous in his own case. I have given hints on this subject to those who seemed most to require them.

**UNPUNCTUAL ATTENDANCE.**—This is a serious hindrance to progress at some schools, and is, perhaps, more mischievous in some respects than irregularity, inasmuch as, while losing a very considerable portion of each school day, unpunctual scholars are nevertheless marked as *present*, and being naturally confounded with those whose attendance is both regular and punctual, their failure reflects an amount of discredit upon the schools which they do not deserve. In one small school three children came in half an hour and four three-quarters of an hour after the time. At another several came in nearly an hour behind time. At another two came in thirty minutes and one fifty minutes late, and in the majority of cases I was informed that this was the rule with these particular scholars. In contrast to this, I am glad to be able to refer to one school where unpunctuality was for years almost the rule, but where, under new management, this formidable obstacle to progress has been almost entirely removed. The methods of instruction which prevail at most of the schools are, upon the whole, good. The following defects were noticed at various schools, and pointed out to the teachers before I left the schoolrooms.

Reading was not well treated at a few of the small schools. It was monotonous and jerky at some, and in several the teachers made scarcely any attempt to improve the expression of the scholars by first reading a sentence and requiring the children to imitate the model. The same fault was conspicuous, and generally in the same schools, in the recitation of poetry. There was not in some cases a sufficient testing of the children's comprehension of the subject-matter of the reading lesson, and in one case the teacher allowed the "smartest" boy in the class to answer all the questions, to the neglect of the remainder of the class.

Spelling is generally well taught. I found at one school much time employed by the master in hearing each scholar separately spell the whole lesson, and suggested a method by which he could accomplish his object without the sacrifice of so much valuable time.

Writing in many of the small schools is left too much to chance. The teachers find it difficult to arrange their work so as to give the subject their uninterrupted attention. I have pointed out the necessity for this, and the practice will be adopted as far as practicable. In a few schools scarcely sufficient attention is paid to the manner of holding pens, and, in many, young children are permitted to write on their slates with short stumps of slate pencil—a very bad plan—cramping the children's fingers, and giving them at the outset a bad habit of holding their pencils, which is extremely difficult to overcome. The exceedingly low price at which the Board supplies pencilholders should lead to the abolition of this habit. The holders could be kept in the school, and distributed and collected as the pencils now are, so that very little extra trouble would devolve upon the teachers in consequence of their introduction. I found in some schools that the writing of the primer and lower classes on their slates was not always examined. Nothing can justify this neglect. Children at all disposed to be careless will soon become more so if they find that their work is not regularly inspected. This is true of the mere infants learning to form figures and letters, but it is more so in the transcription exercises of more advanced scholars, which are so useful (when properly treated) for training the eye to correct spelling. If, however, errors are repeatedly committed without correction, the effect of this exercise is rather to defeat the end for which it is designed by accustoming the eye to incorrect combinations of letters, and in such cases bad spelling is likely to become chronic. In connection with writing, I have had, on one or two occasions, to draw the attention of teachers to the necessity of using care in writing on the black-board, whether for copies or for other purposes. If the teacher constantly places a bad model before his scholars, he can scarcely expect them to make much progress in that subject. The instruction at many of the small schools was too individual in its character, and much time was unnecessarily occupied which a collective system of instruction would have saved. I found in two or three instances the upper classes learning by rote small portions of geography, grammar, and history, each child being required to repeat the whole of each lesson word for word, while few or no questions were asked to ascertain how much was understood of what was thus gabbled over. As a rule, too, the lessons thus set for each class were very much in advance of the requirements of their standards, and the home lessons were in some cases too numerous. The exercise-books in use at the different schools ought to supply a fair criterion of the ordinary work of the school, but the credit of some schools would suffer severely if judged by this standard. I have frequently had to draw attention to mistakes, and sometimes whole exercises uncorrected. Nearly all the faults I have alluded to were to be found in the small schools (though some are not confined to these), nor is it surprising that it