

examination. The pupils would thus become familiarised with the mode of conducting examinations, and would be less nervous and more self-possessed when that on the year's work took place. If, after such examinations, a list for each standard was drawn up, with even the total number of marks gained by each scholar, and posted in a conspicuous part of the room, I am sure that it would have the effect of promoting a healthy spirit of emulation among the children. In my report for the year 1880 the following paragraph occurs: "Shortly after the appointment of the present principal of the Normal School I incidentally heard that it was intended to set apart a room in that building as a 'model country school.' I hope this matter has not been lost sight of, as I am convinced that the establishment of such a school would be of the greatest benefit, not only to the students, or, at least, to those of them who intend to seek employment in small country schools, but also to those teachers already so employed who have not had the advantage of any special training for their work. Should such a school be established there are very few untrained teachers in my portion of the district who would not gladly avail themselves of the opportunity of attending it; and I have not the slightest doubt that the experience gained by such attendance for even a fortnight would be of more real assistance to them in the discharge of their duties than two years' lecturing on school management." I am quite sure that, had the suggestion I then made been carried out, it would have effected ere this a very beneficial change in the condition of small country schools, and that, too, at a trifling cost. It is scarcely possible to frame a time-table which will be exactly suitable to the conditions under which even a small proportion of the schools in charge of one teacher are conducted. In several the standards are not the same, in others sewing is not taught, while in others the teachers, fairly competent in other respects, have no teachable knowledge of singing, drawing, and science. I have been at all times ready to assist teachers of small schools in framing suitable time-tables, varying them to suit the conditions of each school. Some years ago I made out a suggestive time-table, and sent copies of it to all schools where I considered that the time-tables in use were not suitable. In some cases my suggestions were carried out, but in others they were totally ignored. Workable time-tables are a necessity in every school; but until the work of some teachers is characterised by more zeal, energy, and tact, they cannot expect satisfactory progress. The adult teaching power in most of the large schools is, I think, more judiciously distributed throughout the classes preparing for examination in standards than formerly. Greater attention is paid to the classes preparing for Standards I. and II. That something is required to be done in this direction is plain from the fact that for several years past large numbers of children presented in the Second Standard either failed badly or passed indifferently, and, further, that several even of those who passed fairly were found unable to enter in an intelligent manner on the work of Standard III. The standard that gave the most unsatisfactory results this year was the Third, and the large schools were mainly answerable for the failures. And I might here point out that the failures were due, not to casual or trivial errors, but simply to inability to do the work at all. There is no change to note in the organization of infant-schools. The staff in such schools still consists of a mistress, assistant, and a number of pupil-teachers, almost the whole time of the mistress being devoted to supervision. There is, as I have frequently pointed out, too much unskilful teaching in infant-schools. I am afraid that a great deal of valuable time is wasted in such schools in wearying and useless repetition, and that children take something like four years to learn what ought to be accomplished in two. It is monstrous to see children whose ages range between eight and nine years spending nearly half their time each day in jerking their arms up and down, in singing nursery rhymes, or in being lectured on the fact that a sheep has four legs.

In the case of several schools examined by me this year I was precluded from expressing in my reports any positive opinion as regards the character of the discipline and instruction, in point of improvement or retrogression, in consequence of my not having previously visited them. In reporting on schools I have always endeavoured to bear in mind general difficulties, and also those peculiar to certain places.

The following table will show, for the total number of schools examined, the number presented in each standard, the number passed, the average age at which the scholars pass, and the number of schools at which the different standards were successfully passed:—

TABLE No. II.

	Number presented.	Number passed.	Average Age.	Percentage of Passes.	No. of Schools at which Scholars were successful.
			Yrs. mos.		
Standard VI. ...	281	209	14 0	74·4	58
Standard V. ...	794	455	13 4	57·3	84
Standard IV. ...	1,512	918	12 3	60·7	104
Standard III. ...	2,169	1,292	11 2	59·6	119
Standard II. ...	2,581	2,086	9 9	80·8	132
Standard I. ...	2,474	2,287	8 9	92·4	140
Totals ...	9,811	7,247	...	73·9	...

It will be seen from the above table that the percentage of passes for the total number of pupils presented was 74, or 7 per cent. less than the previous year. This at first sight seems a sad falling-off; but I do not see that there is any very serious cause for alarm. The large schools were examined five or six weeks earlier than last year, and this to some extent affected the