Standards V. and VI. supplied by the Education Department. On the whole, I am of opinion that the teaching of the pass-subjects has in no way fallen below the level of last year's work, the lower percentage of passes being due to a somewhat stricter examination of composition in Standards IV. to VI., and the unquestionable advance in the difficulty of the arithmetic tests in Standards V. and VI.

The results in class-subjects are classed as "good" in 40 schools, "satisfactory" in 155, "fair" in 115, "moderate" in 31, and "inferior" in 4. In the additional subjects, some of which are not taken up in a number of the smallest schools, the results were "good" in 89 schools, "satisfactory" in 189, "fair" in 60, and "moderate" in 7. These numbers afford evidence of a very general improvement in the teaching both of the class and of the additional subjects of the school course.

The ages at which the standards have been passed are this year somewhat lower than those for last year in all the classes above Standard II. The number of pupils over eight years of age who were not presented for Standard I. is 2,136, as against 1,960 for last year. The preparatory classes, it should be remembered, have now a more comprehensive course of instruction in reading and arithmetic, and enter the Standard I. class with better prospects of getting easily through the lower standards. In Standards I., II., and III. fewer pupils have been presented than was the case last year, while a considerably larger number has been presented in each of the higher standards.

The improvement noted last year in the management and teaching of the preparatory classes has been fully maintained, and in quite half the schools very satisfactory work is being done in this department. Mr. Dickinson points out that in the infant classes in the schools of the southern district "numeration and notation are not well taught," but this experience seems to be exceptional. Ignorance of the addition professed by these classes is much more common than ignorance of numeration and notation, and is, indeed, much more excusable, as addition is much harder to teach well. The teaching of reading has improved much more generally than that of tables and counting. The words of the sentence, and not merely the sentences learned by rote, are now for the most part readily known, and the reading is distinguished by considerable expression. In numerous cases the classification of infant pupils has been found unsatisfactory, children who have attended school for more than a year being taught in the same class with others who have been in attendance only for a month or two. This abuse should be evident to any teacher who truly desires to do the best he can for the younger pupils. The lower primer classes, moreover, do not appear to receive as much attention as the higher ones. Infant classes are still occasionally too large, but the faulty arrangement and the crowded condition of the lower departments often make it hard to avoid this evil as completely as could be desired. The teaching of addition usually receives due attention, but there is more haste than good speed in the way it is worked up in a large number of schools. A thorough mastery of each step before it is left for a higher one is here indispensable, and rapid progress is less desirable than sure progress.

It is in the preparatory classes that the foundation of good order, lively attention, and an earnest working spirit should be laid. The design and treatment of the lessons should aim at developing and confirming these desirable habits, in the fostering of which there is, and will no doubt long be, ample scope for improvement. It is because of their influence in this direction that frequent but short and varied lessons are so important here, and that the massing of crowds of pupils into single classes is so full of risk.

Standard Classes.—"Reading," Mr. Dickinson reports, "is decidedly improving, not only as regards the mere mechanical difficulties, but also in the intelligence and expression with which many of the children read." Mr. Goodwin also says, "Reading has improved in fluency and expression." Mr. Crowe offers no general estimate, but remarks that "this subject would be much more successfully taught if teachers did not attempt too much." I suppose teachers try to overtake what is demanded of them, and the mistake made is rather that their pupils have been advanced into higher reading-books prematurely. As the passing of pupils in Standards I. and II. is in the hands of head teachers, this mistake is not unusual in the smaller schools, and it is not easy for the Inspectors to check it. Many of the examination reports show that it has been pointed out. I think it is a mistake that is becoming more uncommon, though it is likely to be with us for some time to come. While able to bear out the testimony of my colleagues as to the improvement in the teaching of reading, I must add that in a number of the schools I have examined, some of them large and important schools, reading has not been as good as I should expect it to be, and I have had occasion to fail a good many pupils in this subject in the course of the year. Ready, accurate, and distinct reading at each stage of progress should almost be regarded as indispensable for advancement, as it stands in the closest relation to the intelligence that has been developed by the teaching and to its general efficiency. While most rhetorical qualities of reading are of less importance in the elementary school than fluency, accuracy, and clearness of enunciation, a reasonable degree of natural expression is quite as important as any of these cardinal good qualities. There are teachers, not a few, who fail to train their pupils to read with satisfactory expression, owing to weakness of control and failure to get the scholars to put forth their best efforts to satisfy the teacher's aims and his just demands on their attention. In such cases there is no great hope of improvement, as governing power is of the nature of a personal equation, and is but little open to influence by advice or direction from others. There is but one cure for this weakness, and that is the gradual weeding-out of such teachers as show it to a hurtful degree.

There are now very few schools in which two books are not read each year in each of the standard classes. In some districts parents have shown the greatest reluctance to provide their children with a second Reader. One cannot but feel surprise at their short-sighted conduct in this matter, for sufficient breadth and variety of reading are as indispensable to any serviceable knowledge of the art as three meals a day are to the health and vigour of ordinary children. In Great Britain the reading of three books a year is held to be necessary for a satisfactory training in this subject, and it would be an odd effect of our superior climate if the reading of one of these same