

total percentage of passes made, remain about the same as in the previous year, with an increase of 385 presented and 374 passed. The whole numerical result shows that the working condition of the schools remains steady. The following table shows an upward movement (except in Standard VI.) in the classification of the children passed in the several standards:—

	Standard I.	Standard II.	Standard III.	Standard IV.	Standard V.	Standard VI.
1895 ...	1,463	1,552	1,470	1,220	873	607
1896 ...	1,597	1,581	1,533	1,338	942	568

The large schools in Class A have increased from ten to twelve in number, and now include Rintoul Street, with 378, and Pahiatua, with 300. These twelve contain more than the total attendance of the remaining ninety-four, and the inefficiency of one of them materially affects the results of the whole district. We find that ten of them, with here and there a weak class, are in a very sound condition; in one a change in the headship was made at the end of the year, and another is composed of newly-organized material. In the two latter we are hopeful of improved results next year. In most of the city schools we had occasion to commend exceptionally good classes, in which model systematic work was done, whole classes of fifty children being trained to read, write composition, draw, or work arithmetic of a uniformly excellent quality. It is in such classes that teachers possessing natural aptitude, experience, tact, energy, skill, and patience show possibilities in their art, and set an excellent example for others to emulate. They deserve our warmest praise.

Of the fifteen schools in Class B, each with from a hundred to three hundred children, the three largest—Lower Hutt, Greytown, and Mangatainoka—are doing very good work; and so are Vogeltown and Eketahuna. Eight of the remaining ten are satisfactory, but in the other two better work will be looked for in the upper classes.

In Class C we have thirty-two schools, each with less than a hundred children, taught by more than one teacher. Many of these have given great satisfaction, particularly Fernridge, Clareville, Park Vale, Mauriceville E., Hastwell, Hamua, Makakahi, and Porirua. Twenty of the others have done good work, more or less; but in at least three of them, for reasons not always reflecting on the present teachers, considerable improvement is desirable.

There are also thirty-nine small schools, each under one teacher only. These vary considerably in efficiency. The most satisfactory are the Opaki, Waingawa, Rangitumau, Te Horo, Mangaone, and Judgeford Schools. With the exception of four, the others are satisfactory. We were very pleased with the promising management of several which have not been long in operation, such as Ngaturi, Makuri, Makairo, and Nikau; and marked improvement was shown at Cross Creek, Waihakehe, Paikakariki, Mangamahoe, Koro Koro, Stoke's Valley, and Horokiwi.

The five aided schools are all satisfactory. The pupils get so much individual attention in these schools that, under fairly competent teachers, fast progress is generally made.

We are much pleased with the present condition of the infant schools, and especially with the Kindergarten work in them and in the infant departments of all our large schools. By the Mount Cook Infant School and the Thorndon infant department an excellent lead is given to the others, and year by year new occupations, songs, illustrations, reading-matter, drill, and methods of working are introduced, so that we have now fully-equipped classes working on most up-to-date lines. The two infant schools proper at Masterton and Te Aro have this year more nearly approached the work of the others. In the following schools also the Kindergarten work is commended: Pahiatua, Newtown, Opaki, Greytown, Johnsonville, Lower Hutt, Mauriceville W., Clyde Quay, Terrace, Mangatainoka, Park Vale, Petone, and Clareville.

Here and there the style and steady fluency of the reading taught seem to approach our ideal of perfect work. In many of the country schools there is much hesitancy or higgling; the voice also is often raised and the expression unnatural. We are more and more persuaded of the necessity of greater variety of class-books. Where only one Reader is in use the matter becomes stale and unprofitable by too frequent repetition, and parts being known by heart are therefore read in a perfunctory manner. We have recommended the use of two sets (of three primers) for classes below Standard I., and for standard classes of three sets chosen from literary, geographical, historical, science, or domestic economy readers; all these are now excellent new books by the best publishers, beautifully illustrated, strongly bound, full of useful matter, and serving as great aids to teachers. Parents who are really wishful of their children's progress should be only too anxious to purchase these books for them. We commend this matter also heartily to the notice of School Committees, and recommend them to purchase an additional set for school use. The expense of doing so would be small, as the purchase of a set for one class every five years would meet the case. We further recommend the Education Board to make a grant of one-half the cost of one set, provided the pupils themselves have purchased at least two sets. After the present year, in cases where only one set of books is in use, we purpose hearing all classes read from unseen passages which we shall carry with us. In the Thorndon infant department a great exception to rule prevails, which we think worthy of imitation. Not one or two only, but half a dozen sets of excellent "Picture-books for Children" have been provided out of funds raised by school concerts; and not only are these books read in class, but others are lent to be read at home. They afford great interest and amusement to the little ones, and are very helpful to the teacher's work.

The remarks made on the arithmetic syllabus in our last report still hold good. The processes admit of more simplification. Compound interest is still worked by old methods; and, on one occasion, at an inspection visit, seven aliquot parts were used by a teacher in a practice sum for 16s. 8½d. We hope to find the arithmetic tests set by the Education Department more adapted to requirements than they have hitherto been. We are pleased with much improvement in methods in many schools, and with a general improvement in mental arithmetic since a definite syllabus has been worked up to. Mr. Lee's five leaflets on "Arithmetic for Schools simplified," which have been printed by the Board and distributed to the teachers, will, we hope, be helpful to many and useful to all.