

7. EXTRACT FROM REPORT OF THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD FOR YEAR 1895-96.

Cookery.—This subject has been taught in the schools of the Board since 1875. At Lady-day, 1896, there were 151 centres, and the provision of many other centres had been sanctioned by the Education Department. Several of these centres were old schoolrooms, which had been adapted for the purpose. In several schools, so near the limits of the London School Board area as to be beyond the range of any centre, cookery was being taught in one of the class-rooms, fitted up with apparatus for that purpose; and in one instance a room was hired and fitted up with apparatus for children from an isolated school. . . . The Board have decided* that “all girls over eleven years of age, without regard to standard, and all suitable girls in Standard IV. and upwards who are ten years of age shall be required in each year to attend twenty lessons in cookery at one of the cookery centres” Four courses of cookery lessons are commenced during the year. A course extends over six months, and consists of twenty-two lessons. Not more than eighteen children may attend at any one lesson. Cookery has also been successfully taught to some of the deaf girls; they like the work very much, and appear to learn satisfactorily: and the ordinary children with whom they are associated are very kindly disposed towards them.

Children from non-Board schools are permitted to attend the centres for instruction—when room can be found for them without displacing any of the scholars of the Board—upon payment of a fee of 4s. for each girl entered for the course of twenty-two lessons, one lesson being taken each week. During the year ended March, 1896, 688 non-Board scholars were entered for instruction in cookery at the Board centres.

Prizes are given, but to Board-school children only, for regular and punctual attendance during the course. Twenty-one thousand and twenty-eight such prizes were awarded during the year under review. The centres are, as a rule, open during the morning and the afternoon (Saturdays excepted). The food cooked is sold, generally to the children or to the teachers in the schools. During the year under review the receipts from this source exceeded the cost of materials for cookery by £588 7s. 11d.; this amount, however, includes the profit made on the sale of food from the cookery classes in connection with the evening continuation schools.

For the week ended 20th March, 1896, there were 20,932 children on the roll for cookery instruction, and 18,419 in actual attendance. These numbers represent about one-half of the number of children who receive instruction during the year.

The Education Department allow a grant at the rate of 4s. per head on account of those children, in the Fourth or any higher Standard, who have received during the school year not less than forty hours' instruction in practical cookery, and who have spent not less than twenty hours in cooking with their own hands.

The following figures give the number of children who have annually completed a course of instruction during the years ended at Lady-day, 1892-96:—

1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.	1896.
20,243	22,025	24,699	28,809	31,879

Laundry-work.—Laundry-work was first allowed as a subject of instruction in elementary schools by the revised new code of the Education Department issued in 1890. For about a year previously instruction in the subject had been given to some of the scholars of the Board, as an experiment, under a joint committee of the School Board for London, the City and Guilds of London Institute, and the Worshipful Company of Drapers, with funds supplied by the institute and the company. Immediately on the issue of this revised New Code the Board took over and purchased the plant connected with four centres of instruction which had been established, and took steps to extend the instruction.

It was decided to organize the instruction in laundry-work on the same system as that for the instruction in cookery, namely, by centres conveniently placed to accommodate the children from the school where the centre is situated, and also the children from the neighbouring schools.

These centres are generally built upon a portion of the playground, and are detached from the main buildings of the schools. There were at Lady-day, 1896, eighty-three centres, temporary and permanent, in daily operation under the charge of instructresses recognised by the Education Department.

The whole of the district of the Board has been considered with a view to the erection of permanent centres for instruction in laundry-work. One hundred and twenty-seven such centres have been sanctioned by the Education Department. The centres generally consist of—(1) a stepped class-room, about 30 ft. by 22 ft., containing accommodation for fourteen children seated at desks, twelve wash-tubs and four ironing-tables, an ironing-stove, a sand-box, sink, gas copper, and an open fire-range, with hood over latter appliances to carry off steam; (2) a cloak-room (forming entrance lobby). In some instances the laundry centres are combined under the same roof with the centres for instruction in cookery, or for instruction in manual training.

Schools in outlying districts—i.e., those which are beyond the range of any centre—have, in suitable cases, had one of the class-rooms or a temporary iron building fitted up with laundry apparatus, so that the girls attending may not be deprived of instruction in laundry-work.

The staff connected with the laundry centres consisted, at Lady-day, 1896, of 2 superintendents, 53 instructresses, and 36 probationary instructresses. Two supernumerary or “unattached” instructresses have also been appointed, whose duties are to take the place of any instructresses who may be absent on account of illness or any other cause, and otherwise to assist at centres where their services may be required.

* Since the 25th March, 1896, it has been decided that all girls in Standard IV., irrespective of age, shall be required to attend twenty-two lessons in the first course of instruction in cookery, and that all girls in Standard V. shall be required to attend twenty-two lessons in the second course of instruction.