

and composition. It is in arithmetic, however, that the most gratifying improvement has been effected, the number of passes having increased from 65 to 75 per cent. This increase has been produced by greater efficiency in the Fifth and Sixth Standards, the increase in the former being from 48 to 68 per cent. It would be of service for the purpose of comparison if in all districts, now that the test in this subject is the same, detailed information as to the results were published. There is no doubt, however, that the numbers quoted in connection with the arithmetic results of 1897 will compare very favourably with those of the other parts of the colony. This advance has been secured chiefly by the increased attention devoted during the past four years to the thorough preparation of the requirements in arithmetic in the lower classes, and there is every prospect, therefore, of a continuance of efficiency. The general record in the pass-subjects is one of marked progress during the past year.

In the statement here given of the results in the class and additional subjects the schools with a staff of more than one teacher are separated from those in charge of a sole teacher. In one of the former grammar, history, and elementary science are not included in the course, as the pupils are confined to those below Standard III.

Subjects.	In Schools with an Average Attendance of 25 or more.						In Schools with an Average Attendance below 25.					
	Omitted.	Weak.	Fair.	Satisfactory.	Good.	Very Good.	Omitted.	Weak.	Fair.	Satisfactory.	Good.	Very Good.
CLASS-SUBJECTS.												
Grammar	2	1	4	2	1	4	2	4	6	4	2
History	1	...	6	3	...	10	1	1	8	1	1
Elementary science	2	3	5	...	13	1	4	2	1	1
Object-lessons	2	3	5	1	...	2	13	6	1	...
Mental arithmetic...	...	1	1	5	4	...	...	4	4	8	4	2
ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS.												
Recitation	1	3	6	1	...	2	3	7	10	..
Drill	7	...	1	2	...	22	...	...	...	...	...
Singing	4	...	1	3	3	20	...	...	1	...	1
Needlework	2	8	1	11	...	2	2	6	1
Comprehension of reading matter	2	6	3	..	...	3	2	13	2	2

In some cases where, in the smaller schools, class-subjects are omitted, this is owing to the absence of pupils in the higher standards. In other cases the explanation lies in the fact that the teachers are not qualified to give instruction in the subjects in question. The omission of drill and singing in the larger schools and of needlework in all should be owing to very special causes, and every effort should be made by the teacher in each case to provide the necessary instruction. It is satisfying to find that in grammar, history, mental arithmetic, and singing considerable improvement is recorded, and the average results in the first three are now satisfactory. Where singing is taught the instruction is in nearly every case good. The work in elementary science and object-lessons has fallen below the standard of the previous year, and this defect calls for prompt action.

It is gratifying to record that the work of the schools has reached a higher point of efficiency during 1897 than in any previous year during my connection with the educational affairs of the district. While this progress is chiefly confined to the pass-subjects, there are signs of increasing general interest on the part of the teachers in the very important work of other parts of the curriculum. It is, of course, true that in individual cases the importance of these subjects has been inadequately recognised, but these are exceptions. I have not taken this opportunity to indicate how further improvement can be secured, as nothing more than a brief report on the results of the year's work has been attempted. Teachers will find, however, in notes on the standard course printed separately with the Board's annual report, a few suggestions, which it is expected will prove of service in the preparation of the subjects of the syllabus. In these notes no reference is made to grammar, history, and other branches, as the course in their case is definite, and the chief fault, where there is weakness, is the insufficiency rather than the lack of method that characterizes the instruction.

In regard to the exercise of the privilege of freedom of classification in the first and second standards, with the exception of those in charge of the two largest schools the teachers have preferred to waive the right and to leave the examination in the hands of the Inspector. In the cases referred to the classification was conducted with due discretion.

I have, &c.,
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The Chairman, Education Board, Westland.