

The following table gives in summary form the complete returns of presentations, &c., for the year; and for comparison the results of the previous year are also added:—

Classes.	Presented.	Examined in Standards.	Absent.	Failed.	Passed.	Percentage of passes to examined.	Average Age of those that passed.	Remarks.
							Yrs. mos.	
Above Standard VI.	51	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Standard VI. ...	337	334	3	100	234	72.1	14 0	Fallen.
" V. ...	633	614	19	138	476	77.3	13 2	Improved.
" IV. ...	875	832	43	143	689	82.3	12 4	Fallen.*
" III. ...	1,081	1,050	31	138	912	87.2	11 3	Improved.
" II. ...	1,090	1,070	20	77	993	92.7	10 1	Improved.
" I. ...	1,115	1,109	6	92	1,017	92.2	8 11	Fallen.*
Preparatory ...	2,501	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals for 1899	7,683	5,009	122	688	4,321	86.5	11 11	
Totals for 1898	7,582	4,818	84	664	4,154	...	...
Catholic Schools ...	686	481	7	75	396	...	...	...

* In these cases slightly.

It will be noticed from this table that the increase in the number of presentations in standards has more than kept pace with the increase in the attendance. Taken as percentages, the 5,182 pupils above the preparatory classes represent 67.4 per cent. of the pupils on the rolls. This, it appears to me, represents a strong average condition for the schools throughout the district, and the time is coming when the percentage of pupils in the standards will be further increased. But the best aspect of the tabulation is the fact that 24.6 per cent. of the children are above the Third Standard, and are therefore supposed to be capable of reading with good intelligence an ordinary reading-book, of working questions involving practice and weights and measures, and of writing a letter in a clear bold hand and with a fair power of expression.

The improving standard of attainments is the outcome of the better control and more skilful processes on the part of the teachers. A wide distinction, however, is apparent in the government of the schools; there is the discipline of force that controls in some schools, and in others there is the discipline of duty. The former certainly presents a finer appearance than the latter, but I doubt the permanency of this form of discipline in the moulding of character and the unfolding of the mind. It may be that both forms of discipline have their value, but in the training such as school life requires the discipline of duty presents the highest type of school control; and I am always pleased to find the growing tendency in a school to create tone by means of high aims and ideals, rather than by severe forms of punishment such as were so common a few years ago.

In my last report reference was made to the fact that the schools had reached a stage in their progress when an advance might easily be taken into other channels of preparation. The year that has gone by since then has brought with it some changes of importance touching the work of the schools. The Board's amended regulations for the management of the schools require that much more attention be paid to young teachers in their technical training than formerly. The quarterly criticism lesson and the compulsory meeting of the teaching staff for the discussion of matters bearing on the work of the schools are already beginning to be felt in the improved relations among the teachers themselves, and the greater attention that is paid to the methods of instruction. None other than those who visit the schools at intervals for purposes of inquiry and criticism can be aware of the natural tendency in the case of many teachers to "rest and be thankful" in school processes and management. More than once the suggestion has been thrown out in the public Press that Inspectors ought to be removed from district to district; but were this proposal made with respect to teachers I make bold to say that it would be highly beneficial both to the teachers themselves and to education generally. Isolated as so many teachers are, the tendency among them is to become "educationally hidebound," and they dislike change, even though the Inspector's "fads" should come as a saviour to lead them from danger's way. Isolation is the cause of all the trouble, and were it possible to remove teachers from school to school and from district to district without the intervention of School Committees, I am satisfied that great public good would ensue.

The adoption of new regulations for the training and instruction of the pupil-teachers, and the establishment of a school for the special training of ex-pupil-teachers, are events of great moment in the educational history of the district. The isolation referred to above as affecting principal teachers is even more pronounced in the case of pupil-teachers, for, except during their annual examinations, these young people, or the majority of them, are never brought under competitive conditions, and they too often lack those qualities in bearing, speech, and deportment such as are of high importance as attributes of teachers, who are called upon to exert an influence—moral, physical, and mental—upon a whole community of people. It is for this reason that I rejoice to think that the Board has wisely made a start to influence the training of those among the ex-pupil-teachers who have completed their term of service under the regulations.