

Report by H.M. Inspectors
on
SOUTHGATE COUNTY SCHOOL,
MIDDLESEX

*Inspected on
17th, 18th, 19th and 20th May, 1949*

NOTES

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NATURE AND SCOPE OF SCHOOL

Southgate County School is maintained by the Local Education Authority, and at the time of the Inspection had 576 pupils, of whom 283 were boys and 293 girls. Pupils normally enter at 11 years of age and leave at 16; in recent years, however, the number staying for Sixth Form work has increased, and at the time of the Inspection the Sixth Form contained 81 pupils, 44 boys and 37 girls. Late entrants from Modern Schools are accepted as accommodation is available.

Competition to enter the School is keen, and those who secure places should therefore be of good intellectual standard and able to profit from an education of academic type. The occupations adopted by pupils after leaving are varied; a few pass on to various forms of higher education, but most of them readily secure employment locally or in London.

GOVERNING BODY

Governors have not yet been elected, and a Sub-Committee of the Borough Education Committee acts in the meantime. The members of the Sub-Committee take a keen interest in the School and its problems.

PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT

The School is pleasantly and conveniently situated in a quiet part of Southgate. A delightful playing field adjoins the School, but unfortunately it has become too small for present requirements. The buildings have served their purpose well, but they are now out of date and will need very considerable improvement to bring them into line with modern needs. The hall is small for present numbers; it has teaching rooms opening out of it, and it has also to be used as a gymnasium. The outstanding need, however, is for a Library and for books; the School has no Library and very few books at present.

The following list of other needs is not exhaustive, but records some important deficiencies to which attention should be drawn. Some of them may be capable of immediate improvement; others may well have to wait a major reconstruction of the buildings.

- (1) The staff rooms are small and dismal, especially that of the Masters. The condition and furnishings of the room allotted to the Senior Mistress are inappropriate to her position.
- (2) Changing and cloak rooms are small, and there are no shower baths. The number of offices is appreciably below scale.
- (3) There is no separate room for the Headmaster's Secretary.
- (4) There is no Medical Inspection or Rest room.
- (5) Storage room is short, and so too is accommodation for cycles.
- (6) There is need of better Science accommodation.
- (7) Accommodation for the Caretaker is poor. The house which he occupies is sandwiched between the Handicraft and Housecraft rooms, and forms an integral part of this block.

The buildings are not easy to keep clean, they are used for evening work, and reliable labour is said to be difficult to secure. These reasons no doubt explain why the cleanliness and tidiness of the premises leave something to be desired. When the intended internal decorating has been done, it should make a great deal of difference, and the opportunity could perhaps then be taken to remove the old and broken lockers now kept in the class rooms. It is to be hoped that the new decorations will be in light cheerful colours, and that the prevailing dark brown paint will become only a memory of a gloomier era.

Equipment was generally satisfactory, but note-books and stationery were often in uncomfortably short supply. Some text-books were in unusually bad condition.

SCHOOL LIBRARY

The School has, properly speaking, no Library. The room which is so described is a very small class room which also serves as Sixth Form room and stock-room, and it is, in any case, quite incapable of accommodating any substantial collection of books. Nor does there appear to be any other room in the School which could be satisfactorily adapted to the purpose.

In consequence of this lack of accommodation, such reference books as the School possesses are stored—with some difficulty—in the class rooms of the various specialist teachers. The collections vary considerably in scope and value, but all of them fall far below the requirements of Sixth Form students, while the needs of the younger pupils for background reading are not met at all.

With regard to fiction and leisure reading, some provision is made with the help of the County Library. A stock of books, changed at regular intervals, is available for distribution to Form Libraries; and they appear to be well used by the pupils. Here also, however, it is unfortunate that no accommodation for the books exists apart from odd lockers or cupboards.

As the limits of storage space have now been reached, the Authority's Library grant is not being spent; and the insufficiency of reference books continues to be a very serious problem both in the Sixth Form and in the Main School. Whether any improvement is possible without the provision of additional accommodation seems doubtful; but, while the situation remains as it is at present, the educational development of the School as a whole must continue to be severely cramped.

STAFF

It is fitting to begin this section of the Report with a tribute to the Head Master who has served the School continuously for 39 years, first as an assistant master and latterly as Head Master. He is an excellent teacher of chemistry and in spite of severe physical infirmity he has led the School through the difficult period immediately following the war. Mention should also be made of eleven other members of the staff who have served the School faithfully for periods ranging from 20 to 37 years, and of the Secretary whose experience and efficiency make their contribution to its smooth day to day administration.

The assistant staff are equivalent to about 30 full-time teachers, and, when allowance is made for the size of the Sixth Form, this number is not excessive; in fact the appointment of one extra teacher would be thoroughly justified.

Among the assistant staff there are two or three teachers of outstanding powers and several of more than usual merit. The remainder are almost all of satisfactory or acceptable competence; there are only two who seem below standard. The industry and professional skill of the staff are in general to be commended, but their horizon is often unnecessarily closely restricted by the examination syllabus; more liberal teaching methods would be educationally sounder, and need not lower the standard of academic attainment.

ORGANISATION, CURRICULUM AND STANDARD OF WORK

Three Forms, sometimes four, enter the School each year. Under present arrangements two Forms follow a four year course in preparation for the School Certificate Examination; the other Form, or Forms, take five years. Pupils are graded at entry, and again after the first year. The subjects usual to a Grammar School are taught, with the addition of Commercial work in the Sixth Form. Some Forms are exceptionally and undesirably large in number.

The first year Forms (Forms I, of which IA is the best) all follow the same curriculum. The second year Forms (Forms III) do the same except that

Form III A starts either Latin or German. In the third year (Forms IV) the Science course divides; boys usually take chemistry and physics, while girls take biology. In the fourth year (Forms V) pupils drop some subjects in order to concentrate on examination requirements, but, thanks to an ingenious organisation of Sets, they have an unusually wide choice of subjects, and provision is made for all normal needs. Those pupils who spend five years over the course pass through one of the Forms Lower V where they largely mark time for a year. Upper V is a Form for those who wish to sit again for the School Certificate Examination.

The Sixth Forms provide courses in Arts, Science and Commercial Subjects, each planned to extend over two years and to prepare for the Higher School Certificate. The numbers of pupils in the Sixth Forms are given in the Appendix, from which it will be seen that the Science side is the largest, and that few pupils stay for the second year of the Commercial course. There are a few third year pupils in the Sixth Forms.

The curriculum is generally suitable and careful attention is paid to the needs and progress of individuals. The weaker pupils in particular, however, find the pace too quick; the syllabus is much the same for all, whether able or otherwise, in the first three years. It is suggested that a progressively graded course should be planned for the less able pupils, and that a somewhat slower pace would be better for most of the others. It is hoped that more attention may be paid to Religious Instruction, and to subjects such as Music, Handicraft, Housecraft, and Physical Education; it is realised that this recommendation implies giving less time to other subjects or even dropping them for a period from the curriculum. Changes of the kind indicated above will be easier to introduce when the new examination arrangements are in force.

Some doubts are felt about the value of the first year Commercial work of the girls in the Sixth Form. The boys mainly take a substantial course including Economics, Economic History, English, French, Geography, and Accounts; but almost all the girls give 15 periods a week to Accounts, Shorthand and Typewriting, and it may well be that in their own interests they would do better in a Technical College, which can probably give such instruction more efficiently.

It is noted with regret that, as in other schools in the area, most Higher Certificate pupils are taking four principal subjects, and it is understood that this is due to the pressure of University requirements. This results in a very heavy course, and the effects are particularly unfortunate on the Arts side, as little or no time is left for literary appreciation or for reading outside the bare minimum of the examination syllabus. On the Science side, where subjects often reinforce each other more, evil consequences are less obvious: but pupils do not get time to receive proper instruction in the English language and literature and in the other cultural activities with which a well educated person should be acquainted.

The bias of the School is towards Mathematics and Science, and the standard of work is generally satisfactory without being outstanding. Mathematics is probably the strongest subject. Teaching methods too are generally satisfactory, but, as mentioned elsewhere, they are often allied with unnecessary closeness to examination requirements. The need for training in clear and fluent speech should constantly be kept in mind.

SUBJECTS OF TEACHING

Religious Instruction

The School is not in a strong position for dealing with this subject. Of the nine teachers who share the work, though several have some knowledge of the subject, no one is fully qualified to co-ordinate and guide the work of the remainder. The syllabus is a very bare statement of the ground to be

covered, and there has not been enough consultation among the staff to decide on a final objective and to connect the various methods of teaching. The work therefore lacks unity and cannot make much impression.

The subject is not offered for examination. There is no objection to this, but it follows that special measures are needed to induce the pupils to take an interest and to exert themselves. In most of the lessons seen they were not given enough opportunity to take an active part and their attitude was passive.

All Forms up to and including V have one period a week. In Upper V and in the VI Forms there is no Religious Instruction whatever. The difficulty is to find someone able to do the work at this level, but a continuance of the present situation cannot be justified. That the demand for such instruction exists is proved by a small Christian Study Group formed by the pupils themselves, which meets regularly for systematic study and discussion. As the members are drawn from several Forms, there is a prospect that this very commendable activity will continue.

In the present circumstances the main need is for all the staff concerned to meet and to agree upon objectives for a syllabus and upon methods for working towards them. The Middlesex County Syllabus is the Agreed Syllabus for the School but, as it stands, it cannot be covered in the time available and can therefore serve only as a basis and as a guide in planning the work. When a syllabus has been framed, the next step will be to devise means to give the pupils a more active part in learning and therefore a greater interest.

The supply of Bibles causes some difficulty. Pupils are supposed to bring their own and the School also keeps a small supply for emergencies. The system does not seem to be always effective. When the School obtains a proper library, a selection of suitable books, necessary maps and other aids to teaching the subject should form part of it. But in the meantime a start might be made, with expert advice, in collecting a few books which would help the staff in planning work and preparing lessons.

English

English is taken throughout the Main School as a four year course, with the addition of an extra year for some of the weaker pupils. There is also a two year course for the Arts Sixth, leading to the Higher School Certificate; and the Science and Commercial Sixth Forms are given two periods of English weekly in their first year.

The teaching is mainly in the hands of four members of the staff. The senior English Master, who is a well-qualified specialist and a stimulating teacher, shares most of the Fifth and Sixth Form work with a Mistress of great experience. In the middle and lower Forms these two are assisted by a recently appointed young Mistress who combines a sound knowledge of her subject with a commendably lively approach, and by a Master who is clearly handicapped by lack of experience in this type of school. In addition, the Master responsible for Music teaching takes one of the first year Forms, and the boys and girls of Form I A each have a weekly period of speech training and verse speaking with two Mistresses who are not directly concerned with English as a whole. In the particular lesson of this kind observed in the Inspection, the response of the pupils was so lively, and the quality of speech and expression so high that there would seem to be a strong case for extension of this training further up the School, so far as time-table requirements will permit; particularly as the speech of the older pupils leaves much to be desired from the point of view both of clarity and of facility. It is suggested that quite apart from lessons of the type referred to above, more could be done to repair these shortcomings by the provision of constant practice in talking in public at all stages of the pupils' life, whether in the shape of informal dramatic work or through debates and lecturettes.

It should, however, be noted that, while English must necessarily make the

chief contribution to the development of easy and graceful speech, much help can be given by the teachers of other subjects if the importance of clarity and accuracy in speech is constantly emphasised, and if opportunities for class discussion are frequently provided. In general, the value of informal dramatic work seems insufficiently appreciated: while some lively and enjoyable efforts were seen in one of the First Forms, there was little evidence of any systematic development of dramatic work further up the School, apart from the occasional public performances which are prepared out of school time by one of the Mistresses concerned with speech training.

Apart from this deficiency, the balance between the different aspects of the subject is well maintained. The syllabus provides adequately both for systematic training in language and in written self-expression, and for the study of verse and prose literature. On the more formal side the work of the middle Forms reaches a creditable standard: the pupils write clearly and accurately, and they have a sound grasp of elementary language structure and grammar. It is, however, possible that more could be done to stimulate a real interest in and love of reading in the middle and upper Forms. Some of the texts in use, though of sound literary quality, are unlikely to arouse great enthusiasm in the less academic type of pupil; and it is suggested that the provision of sets of prose reading books of a really attractive character for class study might do something towards developing the habit of reading with pleasure and with discrimination.

In the Arts Sixth Form a great deal of hard and conscientious work is being done alike by pupils and teachers; but this work is overshadowed by a consciousness of future examination requirements; and both the methods of teaching and the range of material studied are somewhat restricted in consequence. At this stage the habit of wide and discursive reading needs to be encouraged in every possible way, and the training of pupils in self-reliance and in the power of individual and independent study ranks in importance with the acquisition of knowledge. In this respect the work of the Sixth Form leaves much to be desired; and while it is evident that the lack of a School Library, or even of a collection of reference books suitable to Sixth Form needs, is a very serious handicap, it is possible that more could be done to encourage individual thought and breadth of reading even in the existing circumstances.

History

History is taught by five members of the staff. The senior History Mistress, who holds an Honours degree of London University, was appointed to the School in 1946; her experience is short, but her knowledge and powers of exposition are sound, and her manner is pleasant and confident. The two Masters with whom she shares most of the teaching are young men recently appointed; both of them are hard working and they are ready to consider and experiment with variations of method. Of the other two Masters, one gives Form I C a sympathetic and appropriate introduction to the main course, but the other who teaches Form III C has yet to acquire the technique of capturing the interest and controlling the attention of his pupils.

To offset the inevitable shortcomings of inexperience, the department has all the advantages of freshness and resilience and the senior History Mistress favours a considerable degree of latitude in individual interpretation of the scheme of work. This is based on a four years' main course with a time allowance of two periods a week up to the Fifth Form which has three. Less able pupils may spend an extra year in one of the Lower Fifth Forms, but at present the scheme envisages no separate provision for them in the first three years during which all, irrespective of ability, cover the same ground. Differences of method, content and speed might well be introduced for the benefit of the slower pupils.

In the last year of the main course History becomes an optional

subject, and perhaps because of this an attempt is made in the first three years to give a chronological treatment of British and European history from the beginnings to the present day. Those teaching the subject wisely exercise discrimination in their choice of material within this framework, but a longer course below the Sixth Form would clearly allow a more leisurely treatment and would diminish the danger of superficiality. It was suggested, for example, that the wisdom of attempting, in the first term of the first year, an outline history of most of the early Mediterranean civilisations was at least open to question. For the nine pupils studying the subject in the Sixth Form, where four principal subjects are taken and the time allocated to History is only five periods a week, there is again the risk, particularly in the first two years, of restricting the scope of the work to examination requirements and of curtailing the opportunity for wider individual reading.

The standards of written work in the middle Forms are satisfactory. Note-books are methodically supervised and, on the whole, well-kept; the careful execution of illustrative drawings and diagrammatic work in them is in itself an indication of interest aroused. In some Forms the pupils are encouraged to research along their own lines of interest and to show initiative in assembling information for themselves. It is hoped that this kind of work will be reinforced by a diminishing use of dictated notes. An interesting and fruitful class discussion was heard in Form IV C where the participants showed that they had devoted thought to their subject and were learning to adduce the support of facts for statement of opinion. A start has been made with model work in some of the lower Forms.

In the Sixth Form the written work is characterised by competence and industry rather than by width of reading or independence of judgement, but in the first year, in which five pupils are taking History, both the written work and response in class show promise.

Every attempt could well be made from their earliest days in the School to encourage the boys and girls to widen their interests and to find out the facts for themselves as far as is reasonable. The lack of a proper library is a handicap. There are books available in the School, but it would be of great assistance to the History teaching if their numbers could be greatly increased, if there could be a more generous supply of books suitable for junior and middle school Forms and if the books were easily accessible and conveniently arranged. Opportunities for displaying illustrative material are for various reasons restricted, and in view of this an increased supply of historical atlases (since only pupils in the Sixth and Fifth Forms have their own) and a more extensive use of visual aids where appropriate are possibilities to be considered.

There is evidence in the History department of hard work and some imagination, and it is clear that the senior History Mistress and her colleagues are alive to the importance of arousing the spirit of enquiry and of maintaining the vitality and interest of the subject.

Geography

A well-qualified Mistress with a long record of service in the School is in charge of the department. She is assisted by another Mistress also well-qualified and with much experience. Some help in the lower school is given by a Master and Mistress who, although not geographers, are doing useful work.

The World in outline is studied in the first three years. The fourth year is devoted to revision and to the School Certificate Examination syllabus. Less able pupils sit for the Examination in the fifth year.

The teaching is inspiring and at all stages much use is made of thought provoking questions. In the middle Forms certain fundamental principles are well understood. Freehand and quickly executed sketch map drawing is a prominent feature.

Throughout the School there is a lack of consolidation in the form of carefully written work. Exercise books in junior Forms and those of some of the more senior Forms contain some good work, but on the whole, and particularly in the middle school, maps and written work show much carelessness.

There is little available written work in Form VI. Geographical essays and Ordnance and other map work have not been preserved in a methodical manner; thus it is not possible to assess the standard of written work at this level.

It was encouraging, however, to see work in progress on a seminar basis. The pupils reasoned well and should have gained much from this type of lesson.

A Geography room is used for most of the senior school lessons but it lacks modern equipment. Lessons are illustrated by pictures handed round the class and by an epidiascope. No use is made of the moving film.

The study of the locality is illustrated by lessons in field work in the vicinity of the School. At the end of each term excursions are made to London museums and to places further away where geographical phenomena can be examined.

Many of the reference books in use were borrowed from the local library. It is suggested that this method of obtaining access to works of standard reference should be regarded as a temporary measure until such time as the department is able to acquire a full collection of its own.

French

The three Mistresses and two Masters concerned with the teaching of French are well qualified, experienced and fluent. All have had residence abroad at different times and bring to their work a pleasing use of French in the class room. One member of the History staff is required to teach a first year Form.

The course of work is planned at the outset as one of four years for all pupils. At the end of the third year less able pupils are given a year's revision course and proceed with the original fourth year syllabus in their fifth year. An evenly progressive course, suited in pace and content to the needs of these pupils, should now be considered, while for those who now complete the School Certificate course in four years, a broader approach spread over a longer period promises greater educational benefits.

The work in the middle Forms reflects the limitations imposed by the length of the course. Although a sound initial training in phonetics, pronunciation and intonation leads to an often lively use of French by pupils in the early stages of the course, this practice and much of the resulting linguistic accuracy fall away as the course proceeds. Oral practice needs to be sustained and linked throughout the course with a progressive plan for free composition. The learning by heart of suitable passages of prose and verse is also not sufficiently sustained after a promising beginning. A variety of class readers is in use and comprehension is generally well developed: as a corollary, time should now be found for individual reading for pleasure and for learning more about French life and customs. Mechanical and other aids to learning—at present little used—might well be of assistance, while library provision, now woefully inadequate, is a matter calling for urgent action. Written work shows average competence in the A Forms but falls away elsewhere. The use of exercise books in only a few Forms and the dilapidated state of many of the text-books provide little incentive to neat and accurate work.

The work of the Sixth Form is constricted by the fact that pupils are generally called upon to take four subjects to principal level in the Higher School Certificate. The requirements of this examination tend, therefore, to narrow unduly the scope of the work. Standards are generally satisfactory within the limits thus imposed, but wider reading, the development of independent judgement and a broader approach to aspects of French culture other than the

literary, are elements which require attention if scholarship is to develop as it undoubtedly could and should. Again, better library facilities are a besetting need.

The course provided for the Commercial Sixth Form is more liberally conceived, and might perhaps with advantage be made available to members of the Science Sixth.

Correspondence is maintained with French children by a number of pupils throughout the School. A French Circle meets in the winter months.

The Staff should now take advantage of the wider opportunities offered by an extended and progressive course. Their ability to add to their present commendable endeavours a more liberal treatment, hitherto excluded by a preoccupation with narrow examination requirements, is not in doubt.

German

Two Masters are responsible for the teaching of German. The Master in charge brings to his work a command of the language and a freshness of approach above the average. He is well supported by his colleague.

German is started by the A stream, as an alternative to Latin, in the second year. The course is one of three years to the School Certificate Examination and this limited time allotment has an undoubtedly narrowing effect on the work of the third year. Thus, while pronunciation, oral practice, reading ability and written work develop satisfactorily in the first two years of the course, preoccupation with examination demands restricts their full development thereafter. In the more progressive course now made possible by the new examination requirements two other aspects of the work call for attention. Firstly, it is suggested that free composition should play its part from the outset; secondly, that a uniform system of marking written work, throwing greater onus on the pupils, would lead to greater accuracy and care. The handicap of poor library provision is having a narrowing effect on the reading possible; text-books are often in poor condition.

The very small number of pupils studying German in the Sixth Form is disappointing. The foreshortened course below the Sixth is an obvious deterrent to pursuing a study which must in addition submit to the pressure of being one of four main subjects to be taken in the Higher School Certificate Examination. These influences have a marked effect on the scope of the work attempted, which is necessarily limited to the barebone requirements of the examination, so that wide reading, background studies and the development of a critical sense are almost entirely excluded. Within these limits the standard of work is, however, satisfactory.

Latin

Latin is studied as an alternative to German by the A Forms from the beginning of the second year of the school course, and in the first, second and third year Sixth Forms; nine pupils in all are taking the advanced course. The teaching is in the hands of an Honours graduate of Oxford University who has been on the staff of the School for nearly thirty years. He is painstaking and methodical, and his attitude towards his pupils is kindly and sympathetic.

A Latin course of three years has led to undue preoccupation with examination requirements and to restriction of scope. Emphasis has been placed on linguistic training, and the values to be derived from a consideration of Roman life, thought and institutions have been largely missed. This omission is the more to be regretted since for the majority of those taking Latin their study of the subject has ceased at the end of three years. It is hoped that it will become possible in the future to think in terms of a six or seven years' course of more generous aims and more spacious treatment in which values

will be realised not only from the course as a whole but from each phase of its development.

Teaching is on traditional lines and it was suggested that much greater use might be made of the Latin studied in reader and author. Not merely might vocabulary, grammar and syntax take on a more vital and therefore more memorable significance if tackled through the medium of the Latin read, but exploitation of the possibilities of the subject matter of the text would lead to a richer knowledge of background. There is no classical library and such books as there are for general reading are restricted in number, accessibility and appeal.

Perhaps because they are not sufficiently accustomed to thinking in Latin, a certain lack of confidence and accuracy is to be observed in much of the pupils' written and oral work at all stages. In the lower Forms the written work is carefully done and regularly and sensibly marked. Corrections are systematically carried out and the presentation of the work is generally satisfactory. In the Sixth Form the translation of texts prescribed for examination is prepared with commendable thoroughness. The Latin prose composition attempted does not demand any mature sense of style or sensitive feeling for language, and performance is industrious and adequate within these limits. The work seen in Roman history, to which two periods a week are given, is careful but limited in the range of reading it implies, possibly because of the shortage of reference books available.

It has been suggested that there might be a shifting of emphasis to the Latin itself, a fuller appreciation of Roman life and its contribution to European civilization, and more books appropriate to the interests of pupils of all ages. These suggestions have as their aim the adding of values and liveliness to the course. There is abundant evidence of the hard and devoted work of the Master in charge of Latin and of his own knowledge and standards.

Mathematics

The teaching of Mathematics is mainly in the hands of four Masters, three of whom have worked together here for 20 years, forming a strong team. Two are Honours graduates who give all their time to Mathematics and share the advanced work, while the others have Science degrees and each takes three Forms for Mathematics below the Sixth. In addition, a temporary part-time Mistress is teaching three Forms until a new appointment can be made, and two Forms are taken by non-specialists. One of these, unfortunately, is a first year Form; this arrangement should, if possible, be avoided in the future.

The senior Mathematics Master has been on the staff since 1919. He is a forceful and capable teacher and an efficient organiser. Under his leadership the strong mathematical tradition of which the School is justly proud is well maintained. The teaching generally is thorough and competent, although unnecessarily restricted by over-preoccupation with examination requirements.

Sound schemes of work based on the Alternative Mathematics syllabus of the London General Schools Examination have been carefully thought out in considerable detail. One serious weakness is the lack of differentiation of syllabus for the weaker pupils, which is largely due to the organisation of the School. Mathematics is taught in Forms and is taken by all pupils in the Examination, usually after a four year course. The time allowance is generous—6 periods weekly in the first and second years and 7 in the third and fourth, except for the A Forms, which have one period less after the first year. The slower pupils have an extra year, but the selection is not made until the end of the third year, and a five year Course cannot therefore be planned from the outset. This causes a sense of pressure in some of the weaker Forms. A very good standard of work is achieved by the abler pupils, and teachers and pupils alike are clearly stimulated by the wider scope and range of mathematical ideas covered by the new syllabus.

Mechanics is an optional subject in the Fifth Form. The course is an intensive one, covering the General Schools Examination syllabus in 3 periods weekly for one year. It is taken by all the boys and occasionally by girls.

The Middle School thus provides a good foundation for more advanced work, and a large proportion of the Sixth Form each year take Pure and Applied Mathematics as principal subjects in Higher School Certificate. The teaching is sound and produces thoroughly satisfactory results within the limits prescribed by external examinations. Very little opportunity is given, however, even for boys in their third year in the Sixth Form, to develop those habits of independent thought and study which are the hall-mark of good Sixth Form work, and there are few books of general mathematical interest available to encourage wider reading in the subject. The lack of a room to house the library should not be allowed to prevent the School from acquiring a collection of Mathematics books worthy of its Sixth Form, which could put them to good use.

The out of date text-books in the Middle Forms are gradually being replaced by new ones, but a more adequate and suitable supply of stationery is still needed. The present shortage is producing untidy and badly set out work at some stages in the School and is in danger of lowering the standard of work which otherwise is good.

Science

Four members of the staff teach Science full-time; the Headmaster and five other teachers also help. The senior physics Master and one of his assistants have had long experience entirely in this School. Another Master, more recently joined, and the Woodwork Master make helpful contributions to the work.

Chemistry is in the hands of a Master with some good experience. The Master in charge of biology has been on the staff for four years and is about to move elsewhere. He is assisted by a Mistress of a few years' experience, who has only just arrived and who is making a promising beginning. An English Mistress teaches biology to one junior Form.

Physics and biology are taken by all pupils in the first year. In the second chemistry is added, whilst in the third an option between biology and the other Science subjects is offered. At the time of the Inspection only girls studied biology after the second year, and, with one exception, only boys took physics and chemistry. The drawback to this system of options was revealed in Form VI where some members, with very little previous knowledge, were studying biology in the same group with those who had taken it for three or four years. Moreover, those on the biology side below the Sixth Form rarely find it possible to study physics and chemistry in the Sixth Form.

Throughout the School the teaching is on somewhat formal and theoretical lines. This is partly due to inadequate laboratory accommodation and equipment, shortage of time, and to the large size of classes, particularly in the lower School.

Close correlation between the constituent branches of Science is not apparent in the syllabuses, nor is there much evidence of it with other subjects of the curriculum.

Note-books on the whole are fairly well kept, but they contain collective summaries rather than records of the pupils' own observations.

Much sound work was observed in all three branches. The Sixth Form work shows serious study on the part of its members and careful recording of experiments. In the Fifth Form and lower down in the School there are pupils who find difficulty in keeping up with the pace and their standard is only moderate. The adoption of a progressively planned course suited to the needs of these weaker pupils is a suggestion which may be worth considering.

The main needs of the Science departments are additional laboratories

for advanced work, preparation rooms and more equipment and improvement in the existing laboratories.

Commercial Subjects

A Commercial course is provided for Sixth Form pupils. There were 21 first year and 3 second year students at the time of the Inspection. The second year pupils and the boys in the first year follow a balanced course including French, Geography, Accounting, Economics and Economic History. The girls in the first year usually drop the Economics subjects and take Shorthand and Typewriting instead, thus preparing themselves for minor clerical appointments. The subjects are well taught, and of its kind the course is a good example. It is, however, difficult for a Grammar School to provide the same facilities for commercial instruction as can a Technical College, and the Governors may wish to consider whether transfer to a Technical College might not be in the best interests of some of the pupils.

Art

The Art Mistress, who is now in her third year in the School, has been most successful in gaining the interest of her pupils. Herself a competent artist, she studies the reactions of the boys and girls to various kinds of work and as a result she is able to provide them with stimulating subjects. She is responsible for the whole of the Art teaching except for that of Form I B, taken by another Mistress who collaborates closely with the Art Mistress.

All Forms up to and including IV B have weekly double periods. Girls in IV A have a single period when they choose between Art and Music; boys in the same Form may elect to take Art for the same single period for 1½ terms. Lower V A and B have double periods. Two divisions are made up from the Fifth Forms for those who will take Art in the School Certificate Examination. These pupils have one double and one single period weekly. A few of the Sixth Form who are keen on the subject may come to the Art room for scattered single periods.

Out of school activities include the Art Club, which provides for marionettes, an activity started by a former member of the staff. Boys and girls may also come to the Art room during the dinner hour. Scene painting for the school plays has been done by Sixth Form pupils under the able direction of the Art Mistress.

The Art Mistress believes that practical activities make a stronger appeal to the pupils than talks, but she is aware of the importance of encouraging boys and girls to interest themselves in Art and Craft in everyday life, and makes use of reproductions to illustrate points which crop up in practical activities. The School possesses a comprehensive display of coloured reproductions of old masters in the corridors, and pupils who are inclined to be interested in Art have derived benefit and pleasure from these pictures.

The curriculum includes imaginative compositions, figure drawing, potato and lino prints and lettering, as well as the plant drawing, object drawing, and other subjects required for the School Certificate in the Fifth Forms. Good work has been done in these branches. It may perhaps be suggested that more time might be given to subjects for composition taken from everyday life, for the work of this kind so far done is promising, and the pupils' familiarity with the subject matter constitutes a real advantage.

The Art room is well lighted and not inadequately equipped, but it is rather small for the classes of 35 or more, and the lack of a store means that valuable floor space is taken up with cupboards. It would be well worth while to consider installing under the windows a wall bench with cupboards under it where clear of radiators, for this would make for economy in floor space. The walls might usefully be lined with a surface to take drawing pins: this would obviate the tendency to pin up work on the wooden battens in a some-

what disordered fashion. But the chief requirement in the Art room is redecoration whereby the whole of the ceiling, walls and woodwork would be painted a light colour to form an inspiring background for the activities carried on. Bookshelves should be provided for the small but useful collection of books now hidden in a cupboard.

The Art Mistress is interested in handwriting and has taught this subject in a former post. It is suggested that she might usefully be employed in this capacity; she might with advantage devote some of the Art periods to forming the handwriting of the new entrants.

Housecraft and Needlework

The instruction in Housecraft is confined to cookery and simple cleaning. There is no provision for laundry work and the short time devoted to the subject does not allow for the correlation of all branches of the work into the wider art of home making. The majority of the girls take Housecraft in the third year, but only those offering this subject in the General Schools Examination continue in the fourth and fifth years. A small number continue in the sixth year. This arrangement means that some girls pass through the School without receiving any instruction in Housecraft, and it is recommended that provision be made for every girl to have at least a one year course.

The work in cookery is confined to the syllabus of the School Certificate Examination. Better planning of the work in the third year would give more time in Form V for individual work which would develop not only skill in the craft but also judgement and initiative.

Needlework is taken by all girls in the first and second years, but is then dropped unless it is an examination subject. The standard of work on the garments is only fair. Too much time seems to be spent on the making of specimens; the making of garments which include the various processes should arouse the interest of the girls and raise the standard of the work. There is good correlation with Art and some attractive embroidery was seen.

The Housecraft room is adequate in size and the equipment is satisfactory except for drying cabinet, sewing machines and long mirror. The provision of chairs with tip down backs in place of the folding chairs would allow room for better placing of the stoves. There are some text-books, but they should be augmented, so that the girls may study the subjects more widely than is possible at present.

Handicraft

The work in this subject is in the care of an enthusiastic Master who has been on the staff a number of years. Within the limits set by a short course he contrives to train the boys to reach a satisfactory standard of work in the fundamental exercises, but an improvement in the conditions under which the subject is taught should result in an all-round advance in the boys' craftsmanship.

The syllabus provides for a three or four year course. Under more generous time conditions than are now enjoyed the work envisaged might be possible, but in present conditions some revision might be made which would have regard to developments in the teaching of Handicraft and to present timber supplies. Time is lost for several weeks at the beginning of the first year when cardboard modelling is taken with boys and girls, and also at the end of each year in order to allow some pupils who have passed the School Certificate Examination to have an intensive woodwork course. While the latter experiment may be justified, everything possible should be done to ensure a fuller course than is at present possible for the other pupils.

The woodwork room suffers from two handicaps. Firstly, it has no store for timber, nor it there one for the considerable Evening Institute work which is also done in the room. Secondly, the lighting is poor because a temporary cycle shed shuts out natural light.

In the extension of the subject planned by the Head Master, consideration might be given to the regular teaching of light metalwork which is now being attempted, as need arises, by the Handicraft master.

Music

Music is in the hands of a good musician who has well maintained the school tradition of choral singing. He conducts an admirable four part choir of about sixty voices which, amongst its varied activities, produces a Gilbert and Sullivan opera every year. Its repertoire and standard of performance reflect great credit both upon the Music Master's ability as a choir trainer and upon his keenness in undertaking so much voluntary work.

It is a great pity, therefore, that the same zest and accomplishment are not found in the class work. Various factors contribute to the lack of achievement here. The time allotted to the subject is meagre. Within this limit more is attempted than can be thoroughly carried out and the emphasis is not always upon the most important aspects of the work—the singing of plenty of fine songs, a knowledge of some great instrumental music, and some ability to read music at sight. Equipment for the teaching of Music is inadequate and is not all conveniently to hand in a room devoted to music teaching. Lastly, the Music Master himself is less at home in the class room (particularly with certain classes of high-spirited boys) than with his voluntary choir, and he is inclined to rely too much upon his considerable facility at the keyboard, to the detriment of real effort and attention by the pupils themselves.

A small but enthusiastic orchestra, of which the Head Master is a member, is conducted by another Master, who is a violinist. The School possesses a number of instruments which are lent to individual pupils if they will undertake to obtain private tuition. The time now seems ripe, however, to embark upon a wider scheme of instrumental class teaching at the School itself.

Physical Education

The accommodation consists of a hall-gymnasium which is shared by both boys and girls. It is unfortunate that it is not equipped with proper changing rooms and shower baths. The playground area is below normal requirements and is not of a convenient shape. The School is, however, fortunate in possessing a playing field on the site, and excellent use is made of it. It is understood that a plan has been approved to resurface the far corner and to level the ground around the Canteen; this will give space that is urgently needed. The School uses a playing field with two pitches at Minchenden. The School is also allowed to use the swimming bath at Arnos Grove, and Barrowell Green open air bath in the summer. Only a limited number of boys can attend, and all of these are volunteers.

General. It is hoped that the plan which has already been approved for converting two rooms on the ground floor into changing rooms will be proceeded with at the earliest opportunity.

Boys. The Master in charge of the subject has made very encouraging progress since his appointment to the School. The boys react well to their lessons, have grasped the fundamentals of the subject, and the lower Forms are making considerable progress. It is difficult, however, for the normal physical standards to be reached as long as a number of Forms receive only one gymnastic lesson per week. The Head Master is fully aware of the shortness of time and is trying to find more time for Physical Education, especially for the older boys. During the summer the gymnastic lessons have been linked satisfactorily with the work carried out on the playing field, and the results of a carefully planned and well carried out athletic training scheme are evident.

The boys themselves are enthusiastic and many attend voluntarily after school hours for both gymnastic and recreational training. It is clear that the

Master does not spare himself and gives of his best both in and out of school hours.

Girls. The time allowed for Physical Education is below the average but this is mainly dictated by the limited facilities. The scheme of work is broad and includes gymnastics, athletics, hockey, netball, tennis, rounders, and swimming. The inclusion of some dancing in the curriculum should be considered because there is, at present, no opportunity for creative work.

The Mistress in charge holds a Diploma in Physical Education. The girls work diligently and the general standard of movement is fairly good. In the summer athletics replace gymnastics, and there is evidence of careful training which results in natural development and freedom from strain. In gymnastics this natural, fluent movement is sometimes curbed by the introduction of unpleasing, stilted movements. If the need for some degree of formal work is felt, it should not be necessary to resort to awkward movements. The first year work is free from this discordant note. It is noticeable that the older girls appreciate the opportunity for free individual practice offered in athletics, at which they work with absorption.

Games coaching is careful and thorough, and recent results show that the standard of the play of the teams is progressing. Every girl has the opportunity to learn to swim in the first year, and after that voluntary parties go to the local baths in the summer term.

GENERAL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The School day begins with Assembly in the hall. This function is not as dignified as in some schools, but this may be attributed to the size of the hall, which is too small to take everyone easily, so that those at the back are crowded and unable to share comfortably in the proceedings. If, as seems likely, no rearrangement is possible, it is a matter for consideration whether separate Assemblies for Seniors and Juniors might not be a solution, with the Dining Hut used as needed for this purpose.

The School is organised by Houses, and Prefects are appointed and allotted minor disciplinary duties. The standard of discipline is a matter which comparative strangers to a school are not fully competent to judge, but there was some evidence that discipline tends to be on the easy side. A School Magazine is published once a year, and contributions from individual pupils are commendably encouraged. To judge from a perusal of its contents, School societies flourish, including a vigorous Operatic Society, a Musical Society and a School Orchestra. Various athletic clubs are run by the Former Pupils' Society.

SCHOOL MEALS

Ninety per cent of the pupils stay for dinner which is served in a standard kitchen and dining room prefabricated hut. The dining service was quite orderly but noisy, and there was little evidence of any social training. The meal on the day of the inspection was well cooked and adequate in quantity.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The School continues to do good work with a bias towards Mathematics and Science. The standard of work is satisfactory, but teaching methods are apt to be unnecessarily dominated by examination requirements. The buildings have grown out of date, and major decisions on this matter are needed; in the meantime lighter decorations, the provision of flowers and similar aesthetic amenities as available would relieve their present rather gloomy appearance,

APPENDIX

Numbers and Ages of Pupils in Forms

| Form | Total No. of Pupils | Average Age on 30th April, 1949 | | Number of Pupils in the School whose ages reckoned on 30th April, 1949, were: | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| | | | | 11 and under 12 | 12 and under 13 | 13 and under 14 | 14 and under 15 | 15 and under 16 | 16 and under 17 | 17 and under 18 | 18 and over |
| I C | 37 | Y. M. 12 7 | B | 3 | 10 | 4 | — | — | — | — | — |
| | | | G | 5 | 8 | 7 | — | — | — | — | — |
| I B | 50 | 12 2 | B | 9 | 8 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| | | | G | 10 | 8 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| I A | 35 | 12 4 | B | 5 | 13 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| | | | G | 4 | 13 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| III C | 36 | 13 3 | B | — | 6 | 11 | — | — | — | — | — |
| | | | G | — | 6 | 10 | 3 | — | — | — | — |
| III B | 36 | 13 5 | B | — | 4 | 11 | 2 | — | — | — | — |
| | | | G | — | 7 | 12 | — | — | — | — | — |
| III A | 35 | 13 3 | B | — | 8 | 8 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — |
| | | | G | — | 3 | 14 | — | — | — | — | — |
| IV D | 31 | 14 1 | B | — | 2 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 | — | — |
| | | | G | — | — | 6 | 7 | 3 | — | — | — |
| IV C | 36 | 14 9 | B | — | — | — | 5 | 12 | 1 | — | — |
| | | | G | — | — | 3 | 7 | 3 | — | — | — |
| IV B | 35 | 14 5 | B | — | — | 3 | 14 | 1 | — | — | — |
| | | | G | — | — | 1 | 13 | 3 | — | — | — |
| IV A | 34 | 14 5 | B | — | — | 4 | 9 | 2 | — | — | — |
| | | | G | — | — | 3 | 15 | 1 | — | — | — |
| L V B | 17 | 15 2 | B | — | — | — | 1 | 5 | — | — | — |
| | | | G | — | — | — | 6 | 4 | 1 | — | — |
| L V A | 25 | 15 2 | B | — | — | — | 5 | 7 | 2 | — | — |
| | | | G | — | — | — | 4 | 7 | — | — | — |
| V C | 26 | 16 0 | B | — | — | — | — | 3 | 2 | 2 | — |
| | | | G | — | — | — | 7 | 6 | 6 | — | — |
| V B | 33 | 15 4 | B | — | — | — | 5 | 12 | 2 | — | — |
| | | | G | — | — | — | 5 | 5 | 4 | — | — |
| V A | 33 | 15 5 | B | — | — | — | 5 | 10 | 3 | — | — |
| | | | G | — | — | — | 4 | 5 | — | — | — |
| U V | 11 | 16 1 | B | — | — | — | — | 4 | — | 1 | — |
| | | | G | — | — | — | — | 3 | 3 | — | — |
| VI B Com. | 21 | 16 8 | B | — | — | — | — | 1 | 5 | 2 | — |
| | | | G | — | — | — | — | 2 | 8 | 3 | — |
| VI B Arts | 10 | 16 9 | B | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | — |
| | | | G | — | — | — | — | — | 7 | 1 | — |
| VI B Sc. | 11 | 16 6 | B | — | — | — | — | — | 6 | 1 | — |
| | | | G | — | — | — | — | — | — | 4 | — |
| VI A Com. | 3 | 16 11 | B | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 2 | — |
| | | | G | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| VI A Arts | 8 | 17 8 | B | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 1 |
| | | | G | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| VI A Sc. | 28 | 17 8 | B | — | — | — | — | — | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| | | | G | — | — | — | — | — | — | 6 | — |
| Totals | 576 | — | B | 17 | 51 | 44 | 54 | 60 | 28 | 18 | 11 |
| | | | G | 19 | 45 | 61 | 71 | 42 | 36 | 16 | 3 |