

UNIVERSITY



OF LONDON

REPORT

ON THE

EDUCATIONAL WORK

OF

SOUTHGATE COUNTY SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

MATRICULATION AND SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL
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Note: This Report, if published at all, must
be published in extenso, and a copy
should be sent to the University.

February 1937

Inspectors:

Mr Walter Ripman, M.A.
Mr F. E. A. Traves, M.A.
Mr C. A. Wicks, M.A.

THE COUNCIL has the honour to submit the following Report, based on the reports of its Inspectors, upon the educational work of SOUTHGATE COUNTY SCHOOL. This School was inspected by the University, for the second time, in ^{February 1921} ~~November 1913~~; and by the Board of Education, for the third time, in October 1931.

At the beginning of the School year there were 542 pupils, 298 boys and 244 girls. Of these 87 per cent had received their earlier education in Elementary Schools. The full school fee was paid by 231 pupils, 118 were partially exempt from the payment of fees and 193 totally exempt.

There is a considerable demand for admission. In view of this it is satisfactory to find that only 91 were admitted last September, for 30 is the desirable maximum for a Form. As will be seen in the following table there are at present nine Forms with over 30 pupils in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Forms.

A satisfactory number of pupils proceed to places of higher education. In the years 1932 to 1936 eight major scholarships have been won, including five State Scholarships - a very creditable achievement. There are some candidates every year for the Civil Service appointments. The majority of the pupils take up commercial work on leaving School.

A Memorial Scholarship Fund was started some years ago and now amounts to £771. The interest accruing is paid to deserving pupils.

The results of the last School Examinations testify to the good work that is being done; all the nine Higher candidates were successful, and seventy-eight of the eighty-seven General School candidates, thirty-five qualifying for Matriculation, while all the thirteen who had previously passed the General School Examination now qualified for Matriculation.

The accommodation is not entirely adequate for so large a School. The assembly hall is too small and it is desirable that a larger hall and a gymnasium should be provided. The present

assembly hall might furnish a lecture room and a library, which is badly needed.

The need for advanced laboratories for Chemistry and Physics is mentioned in the section on the teaching of Science in a later part of this Report.

The installation of a hot-water supply and the diversion of the footpath that runs between the School and the playing field are minor improvements that deserve to be recorded.

The following table shows the number of pupils in each Form, their average age at the date of the Inspection, and the amount of time per week given to preparation.

Form	No. of Pupils	Average Age	Preparation	
			In class	Out of class
VIA Sci.	11	15 yrs. 10 mths.	Varies	Varies
VIB Sci.	13	15 yrs. 11 mths.	Varies	Varies
VI Arts	8	16 yrs. 8 mths.	Varies	Varies
VIB Com.	3	16 yrs. 8 mths.	Varies	11 hrs 30 mins.
Up.V Com.	10	16 yrs.	2 hrs. 10 mins.	13 hours
Up.V C.S.	13	16 yrs.	2 hrs. 10 mins.	12 hours
Up.V M	26	16 yrs. 1 mth.	2 hrs. 40 mins.	11 hours
VA	33	14 yrs. 11 mths.		13 hours
VB	34	14 yrs. 11 mths.		11 hours
VC	29	15 yrs. 9 mths.		11 hours
LV	17	15 yrs. 4 mths.		7 hrs. 30 mins.
IVA	33	14 yrs.		8 hrs. 20 mins.
IVB	35	14 yrs. 3 mths.		7 hrs. 20 mins.
IVC	32	14 yrs. 2 mths.		7 hrs.
IVD	32	14 yrs. 2 mths.		7 hrs. 30 mins.
IIIA	36	12 yrs. 11 mths.		8 hrs. 5 mins.
IIIB	35	13 yrs. 2 mths.		6 hrs. 40 mins.
IIIM	36	13 yrs. 4 mths.		6 hrs. 20 mins.
IIA	30	12 yrs.		5 hours
IIB	31	12 yrs. 3 mths.		5 hours
IIC	30	12 yrs. 1 mth.		5 hours
<u>Total 527</u>				

The work in class amounts to five hours daily; there is no school on Saturdays.

Two thirds of the pupils have a four years' course leading up to the First School Examination. This entails very hard and concentrated work and from some points of view a five years' course for all would be preferable. It is, however, felt that local conditions render this inadvisable, as it would tend to weaken the top of the School.

*Awaiting the
Report of B. G. S.
end of May*

The amount of preparation required in the Fifth Forms is too heavy; nine hours a week should be regarded as the maximum.

The Curriculum may be considered normal. Latin and German are alternative, being begun in Form IIIA and continued in the Upper A Forms. In Form VI Arts, Geography and History are alternative and Shorthand and Typewriting may be taken. In Forms VIB Comm. and Upper V Comm., German and Preparation are alternative and in the latter, as elsewhere, Domestic Science is taken by the girls and Manual Work by the Boys. In Form Upper V Civil Service, German is alternative to French. In Forms Upper V Matriculation, VA, VB and VC there is a choice of Chemistry or Geography and of Physics plus Mechanics or Botany. A similar choice is offered in lower Forms.

Economics is taken by Forms VI Comm. and Upper V Comm. and Economic History and Accounting are also taken by the former. General Knowledge is taken by the Sixth Forms for one period a week; the class is conducted by the Headmaster.

THE INSPECTORS record in the following sections their general impressions of the work in the main subjects of the Curriculum:

The work in English is under the direction of an experienced and extremely able Master, and is carried out by himself and several other members of the Staff. It might perhaps be better for him to undertake the teaching of the higher Forms instead of the lower, as at present. The results of thorough teaching are to be seen in many directions. Reading aloud, as it occurred incidentally during the Inspection, was clear and intelligent, and poetry was naturally spoken. Handwriting was on the whole good but in some cases almost illegible. It seemed as though too much writing was required everywhere. Some serious evils arise from this; the pupils often have to take notes while the teaching is

proceeding, which leads to a dangerous division of attention and also involves considerable stooping and close eye-work; the corrections become overwhelming for the teachers. It is suggested that more of the energy of both teachers and pupils would be better spent in effective oral and graphic work, that is, oral answers from the pupils, graphic blackboard work, and prepared speeches, instead of written essays, by the pupils. Memories may fail at an Examination, perhaps, but the grasping of a fact or idea firmly in class may well outweigh the taking of a note to be learnt up afterwards.

A careful syllabus gives attention to composition, grammar, verse, paraphrase and précis, while much time is devoted to literature. Perhaps on the formal side too wide a field is covered in the younger and middle Forms, e.g. analysis and paraphrase might be more incidental, as in correcting compositions or learning poetry, than regarded as another branch of the subject to be acquired.

The teaching of literature is almost without exception both thorough and inspiring.

It was pleasing to note that loose sheets were being used for exercises in preference to notebooks. Although considerable practice in writing is necessary, it is not essential that every written exercise should be scrupulously corrected - if the teacher's health and buoyancy of temper are to be considered.

History is fortunate in being in the hands of three teachers, all excellent but quite unlike in style and method. The younger Forms are thoroughly grounded without being bored, and the upper Forms inspired to think and read and judge for themselves. The syllabus is on wide lines, and the textbooks are intelligently used as servants, rather than masters, of the pupils.

Geography continues to occupy a strong position in the School. The pleasant room set aside for this subject is well equipped with excellent furniture and there is plenty of black-board space for sketch-maps and diagrams. The general equipment of maps, apparatus and illustrative material has been kept up to date and is in every way suitable.

The greater part of the teaching continues to be given by a specialist teacher whose vigorous personality elicits good response from her pupils. She is ably assisted in the work of the Fifth and Sixth Forms by the present Headmaster, while the first year's course is in charge of another Mistress who is also quite competent.

The scheme of instruction provides a three-year course for some pupils and a four-year course for others. In both courses sound work is accomplished. While special emphasis is given to the human aspect of the subject, Physical Geography is by no means neglected.

The time allotted is adequate but not generous and, in view of the shortness of the course, the amount of ground covered and the good standard attained by the pupils afford evidence of highly skilled teaching. The Inspector was particularly impressed by the effort that is made to give the pupils a sense of responsibility in reading, selection of material and map drawing.

On the whole, the work in Geography is very sound. The extension of the main course to another year would provide for a fuller treatment of World Geography without undue pressure.

Economics and English Economic History form part of the post-Matriculation Commercial course taken by thirteen pupils, of whom three only are in their second year.

A good impression was obtained of the teaching of English Economic History which is given in the second year. Good use is made of the well-chosen selection of books and a sound knowledge

of the landmarks in English Economic History is imparted by class discussion on essays prepared by the pupils themselves.

The syllabus in Economics appears to be too analytical and remote for many of the pupils in the first year of the course. A simpler treatment of the subject is desirable, or, as an alternative, a first year course in English Economic History might be substituted.

French is taught in all Forms and receives an unusually generous allowance of time. In the first year, no less than seven periods a week are allotted to it, as well as in Forms VB and VC, and six periods in a number of other Forms. Seven members of the Staff share the teaching, and as they are all fully competent, it is not surprising that the results achieved are highly satisfactory.

The classes are well handled and the methods employed are sound.

The pronunciation reaches a creditable level; in the upper Forms it is distinctly good. Translation, both from and into French, is carefully handled. The written work inspected left a favourable impression.

The work of Form VI was very satisfactory. Four of these pupils are taking the Higher School Examination this year, and two next year.

The pupils are encouraged to do some private reading but, unfortunately, there is not much time available for this. The French library contains some 250 books.

German is begun in Form IIIA and taken in Forms IVA, VA, and in the Civil Service Form as well as in the Commercial and Science sections of Form VI. It is taught by a capable Master who possesses a sound knowledge of the language and shows much promise as a teacher. He corrects the pronunciation carefully and his grammatical explanations are clear.

It is to be regretted that there is no advanced work in German.

Latin is entirely in the hands of one Master, whose teaching, from the beginners to the advanced class, is entirely satisfactory.

The work in Mathematics continues to be conducted on sound lines with gratifying results as far as Examinations are concerned.

The teaching is shared between four Masters and two Mistresses, all of whom are fully qualified for their task and are careful and thorough in their methods. The responsible Master, besides doing excellent work in the Sixth and Fifth Forms, exercises good judgment in his supervision of the main school course.

The syllabus in Pure Mathematics for the main school up to Form V is limited to Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry; a little Numerical Trigonometry is begun in the third year and continued in the last year. Mechanics is taken by the boys of the third year (one period a week) and fourth year (three periods a week). The textbooks in use are suitable and the time allotted is adequate and even generous in some divisions of the Fourth and Fifth Forms.

The standard reached throughout the course is very satisfactory. The scope of the syllabus is still somewhat unduly restricted especially for the abler pupils.

The importance still attached to the possession of a Matriculation Certificate for the purpose of obtaining suitable employment tends to cause a certain amount of marking time, especially where the main course is one of four years only.

The addition of a year to the main course would remove some of the pressure in the middle Forms, would provide for a wider scope in Mathematics for the abler pupils and would ensure a greater degree of maturity in the pupils entering upon Sixth Form work. At present no pupils take the paper in Mathematics (more advanced) at the First Examination.

A two-year course is arranged in the Sixth Form; the syllabus covered is that for the Higher Certificate Examination and a good standard is maintained.

The work in Science has made good progress since the last Inspection, and shows distinct promise for the future.

The course in the first year consists of some General Physics, Nature Study and a little Animal Biology. Chemistry is begun in the second year and is taken with Physics and a little Biology by both boys and girls.

In the third year the boys continue with Chemistry, Physics and a little Biology, while the girls take up Botany with the addition of a little Chemistry for half the year.

In the last year of the main course, Chemistry is made an alternative to Geography, and Physics plus Mechanics an alternative to Botany, so that the number of boys who take up Chemistry is rather small.

The teaching is in charge of four specialist teachers, the Senior Chemistry Master, the Senior Physics Master, the Senior Botany Mistress and the Biology Mistress. In addition, three of the mathematical Staff assist with the middle School Physics and the Headmaster takes the Biology of the first year. The short course in Chemistry given to the third year girls is taken by the Senior Botany Mistress.

The Masters responsible for Chemistry and Physics are very able and energetic teachers. They have given many years of service to this School and have worked out with considerable care the courses in these subjects. Both the teaching and laboratory work are efficiently organised and the assistance given by the mathematical Staff is competent.

The time allotted for Chemistry is normal, but the shortness of the course (three years) causes many pupils of average ability to drop the subject at the end of the second year.

The laboratory work in Chemistry is definitely handicapped by a serious defect in the design of the laboratory. No water supply has been provided for the main working benches and, in view of the large classes, steps should be taken to provide sufficient sinks and an adequate water-supply. The addition of a fume cupboard near the Demonstrator's table is also desirable.

The syllabus in Physics has, up to the present, been mainly confined to the branches Heat, Light and Sound. A certain amount of Magnetism and Electricity is taught in the second year, and Mechanics, treated to some extent experimentally, is taken in the third and last years of the main course. The alteration in the examination syllabus for the First Examination will doubtless widen the Physics course for the average pupil, with the elimination of much unnecessary mathematical material in the middle Forms. It is doubtful, however, if the full educational benefit of such a course can be reaped in four years, and the extension of the main school course to one of five years is worthy of careful consideration. Such an extension would also be of value to the work in the Sixth Form. *- f. it existed when a 5 years course was in operation*

With the growth of the School, laboratory accommodation for Physics is barely sufficient. More working space would be available had not the laboratory been provided with some unnecessary sinks and a large fume cupboard. There is now *take out sinks & fume cp* insufficient space for keeping apparatus in good condition and the addition of a room which could also be used for Sixth Form work is desirable.

Botany continues to be the chief Science subject for the girls and the teaching is in competent hands. The Senior Botany Mistress, who has had many years' experience, receives excellent assistance from the Biology Mistress.

In the upper classes the notebooks showed a good standard of neatness and accuracy, and creditable results were obtained in the First Examination last year.

Some little effort has been made recently to give Biology a place in the Science curriculum. At present short courses in Animal Biology (one period a week) are given in the first, second, and third years, and the subject is taken up again in the Sixth Form by a few pupils.

The Biology Mistress is keenly interested in her subject and has succeeded in arousing the interest of her pupils. There is a well-equipped biological laboratory and adequate apparatus; it is to be hoped that in the near future a full three year course up to the First Examination stage, with a satisfactory time allowance, may be adopted for the pupils who show a taste for this important subject.

There are twenty-four pupils in the Science Sixth Form; of these thirteen are in their first year. The syllabus in Chemistry, Physics, Botany and Zoology is on Higher Certificate lines and a satisfactory standard is reached by those who complete the course.

*They have
School
Library
now*

The work of the upper Forms, especially of the Sixth Form, would be greatly helped by the provision of a School Reference Library. There is a sufficient supply of reference books in the laboratories of which more use could be made if a room were available for quiet study.

A laboratory assistant is now urgently needed to help the Science Staff in keeping the laboratories and apparatus in good order.

Art follows the usual lines both as to time allotted and subjects included. The syllabus covers Lettering, Design, Memory Drawing and imaginative work. It is suggested that some time might be given to rapid and informal drawing from the life as an aid to imaginative work in illustration. Good use is made, by lectures and lantern slides, of the particularly fine collection of pictures in the School.

Domestic Science includes Needlework and associated handwork; Cookery; and as much Housewifery as is necessary and incidental to these subjects. The pupils are very eager to learn and, while the teaching is friendly and informal, it is exact and thorough. The pupils are free to ask about their difficulties as though they were at home. Notebooks are carefully kept and well arranged. The lack of space and equipment, when it seems troublesome, is made the occasion for ingenuity and this in itself is perhaps more valuable as a preparation for life than "every modern perfection".

The teaching of Music was not inspected on this occasion. It is understood that there is an Inter-House competition in Music every Summer and, in other ways, due attention is given to the subject. One period a week is allotted to Music in all Forms from IVB to IIC.

Two or three periods a week are assigned to Physical Training and Games. The instructors made a favourable impression on the Inspectors by their methods of teaching.

The Corporate Life of the School is healthy. There are sixteen Prefects, eight boys and eight girls. The House system has been adopted and there are four Houses (Black, White, Red and Blue) for boys and the same number for girls.

There are several School Societies: the Senior and Junior Debating Societies, the Dramatic Society, the Orchestral Society, the Operatic Society, which has successfully produced a Gilbert and Sullivan Opera annually for some years, and the Verse-Speaking Society.

The School Magazine constitutes a good record of the varied activities of the School and of its past members.

The Old Scholars' Association now contains both Old Boys and Old Girls, their separate Associations having been amalgamated. They have their own Dramatic Society, Lawn Tennis Club, Cricket Club, Football Club, Badminton Club and Hockey Club.

There is a Parents and Staff Association numbering 413 members, which does good service to the School.

The Staff constitutes a body of able and conscientious teachers, as is clear from the subject reports given above. Their relations with the pupils seem excellent.

The Inspectors received a very favourable impression of the sound work that is being done in this School, and they formed a high opinion of the Headmaster, who directs it with manifest insight and sympathy and spares no pains to secure increasing efficiency.

S. H. Sherrack.

Secretary to the Council.

University of London
W.C.1.

February 1937.



REPORT

ON THE

EDUCATIONAL WORK

OF

SOUTHGATE COUNTY SCHOOL

Please read, initial & return to the Study



W.A.

Q.P.M.

P.K.

S.M.

M

R.B.

E.P.A.

R.B.

w.c.g.

T.W.

J.H.

M.M.

S.C.S.

M.L.B.

~~E.P.H.~~

M.S.R.

E.E.B.

A.J.

E.J.P.

I expect that a further report will follow after the written test.