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# EDUCATION IN 1938

BEING THE REPORT OF  
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE  
STATISTICS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

*Presented by the President of the Board of Education  
to Parliament by Command of His Majesty  
May, 1939*

## LONDON

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STATISTICS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

BOARD OF EDUCATION

EDUCATION IN 1938 (Cmd. 6013)

Errata

Page 116 Table 21(2) Col. 2 Head 5. 2647 should read 264.

Page 132 Table 37 Col. 5 Head 2. 11 should be inserted.

Page 165 Table 72 Col. 5 Head 4(a). 72,985 should read 72,958.

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## PART I

THE REPORT OF  
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FOR 1938

[All the Chapters of this Report, except Chapter X, refer to  
England and Wales. Where separate reference is made to England  
or Wales, the County of Monmouthshire is to be understood as  
being excluded from England and included with Wales.]

THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO THE KING'S  
MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY IN COUNCIL FOR THE  
YEAR 1938

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY

WE submit to Your Majesty the Report of the Board of Education for 1938.

1. The present Report deals with the calendar year, carrying the record of the Board's administration down to the 31st December, 1938. It is combined with the Board's annual statistics, most of which relate to the period ended in March or July of that year.

2. The Board's estimate for the year 1938 amounted to £51,002,330, showing a net increase of £1,463,371 as compared with the estimate for the preceding year. Of this increase £329,000 was due to increased expenditure by local education authorities on elementary education, both on normal services and on approved schemes of reorganisation and development, and £479,000 was attributable to an increased expenditure by local education authorities on higher education, especially on technical education. The automatic growth of expenditure on teachers' pensions, due to the growing number of pensioners, was responsible for an increase of £429,000. The estimate also made provision for an increased expenditure of £277,060 under the Physical Training and Recreation Act, 1937.

3. The steady progress with the reorganisation of the elementary school system on the lines of the Hadow Report on the Education of the Adolescent, which was recorded in our last Report, continued during the year. In the twelve months ended 31st March, 1938, 1,023 departments were affected by schemes of reorganisation, and by the 31st December of that year 628 departments were added to that number. On 31st March, 1938, approximately 63.5 per cent. of the total number of pupils aged 11 and over were in reorganised schools. During the year 116 schools were removed from the "Black List," and the number of over-large classes showed a further marked decrease.

As was announced in Circular 1456 of June, 1937, the Board had decided to fix the 31st December, 1940, as the final date for approval of capital projects to qualify for the special 50 per cent. grant for the reorganisation and development of elementary education. A review of the position, however, indicated that in some areas,

owing to causes beyond the authorities' control, proposals would fail to qualify for the special grant unless the period of its operation was further extended. The Board therefore decided, after consultation with the Treasury, that in cases where they were satisfied that the circumstances were such as to justify the extension, the special rate of grant would be continued to cover works approved by them up to the 31st December, 1943. It was felt that, in the interests of the authorities and of the Exchequer, it was desirable during this period to reduce other forms of educational expenditure on capital projects. The Board accordingly decided to limit the expenditure on the building of secondary schools, so far as possible, to the provision of new schools to meet the needs of new centres of population.

In February, a Departmental Committee was appointed, under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Eveline M. Lowe, J.P., to consider the question of instruction in domestic subjects, particularly cookery, in public elementary schools.

4. The number of pupils in grant-aided secondary schools continued to increase, there being 9,657 more on 1st October, 1938, than on the same date in the preceding year. The Regulations for Secondary Schools were amended to extend the capitation grant payable to schools in receipt of direct grant to pupils who, admitted to such schools for the first time during the school year, were at the beginning of that year between ten and eleven years of age.

Two important developments have taken place during the year in connection with the approved Examinations for Secondary Schools. The first was the submission to the Board by the Secondary School Examinations Council of proposals for radical changes in the conditions for the award of School Certificates. These conditions were announced by the Board in Circular 1463, and it is hoped that they will have been adopted by the Examining Bodies by 1940, if not before. The second development was an investigation by the Secondary School Examinations Council into the Examinations for the Higher School Certificate. A fuller account of these developments is included in Chapter II, together with a note by one of Your Majesty's Inspectors on the subject of "Standardisation of Marks."

In October, the Board issued an educational pamphlet entitled "The Organisation and Curriculum of Sixth Forms in Secondary Schools."

5. The numbers of full-time and part-time students attending the various types of schools and courses recognised under the Regulations for Further Education again show an increase. Although there is a steady development in the provision of junior full-time schools, it is felt that there is scope for a further development of such schools in connection with the engineering, building and constructive

trades in a number of centres, and investigations are being made on these lines.

In our Report for 1934 we referred to the provisional arrangements for the establishment of a scheme of Certificates in Commerce. As a temporary measure the Board undertook the duties which, under such schemes, are carried out by the professional institutions concerned, but we are glad to report that an agreement has now been reached by which the Association of British Chambers of Commerce will co-operate in the scheme and that under the new arrangement certificates in commerce issued on the results of the Final Examinations will in future be National Certificates signed on behalf of both the Association and the Board.

Revised Adult Education Regulations were issued during the year, with effect as from 1st August. The main change of substance concerned University Extension Courses and the reasons for the change are set out in Chapter V of this Report.

6. In January, the Board issued Circular 1461 which set out, for the guidance of those concerned with the problem of the protection of school children in times of air attack, certain considerations which it was recommended should be borne in mind when the problem was under review.

The problem of spreading the school holidays was raised by the issue in April of the Report of the Committee on Holidays with Pay, presided over by Lord Amulree. In Administrative Memorandum No. 181 the Board announced arrangements whereby children would be able to accompany their parents on annual holidays, should they fall during the school term, without any consequent loss of grant to the local education authority. The question of the removal of the School and Higher School Certificate Examinations from the holiday tract was fully explored at meetings between officers of the Board and representatives of the universities, the teaching profession and the local education authorities. It was made clear that any alteration of the dates of the examinations would involve considerable dislocation of the school system and in view of the uncertainty of the effects of holidays with pay and the relatively small number of pupils likely to be inconvenienced, the Board did not feel justified in asking examining bodies to make any change in the immediate future. The problem will, however, be studied in the light of further experience.

7. Some details of the progress which continues to be made in the School Medical Service, including a review of the progress made in the provision of nursery schools in the last twenty years, will be found in Chapter VI. Reference is also made in that Chapter to the provision of free meals and milk for necessitous under-nourished children and to the survey which the Board are conducting as to the adequacy of such provision.

The Committee which had been set up to enquire into problems relating to children with defective hearing presented their Report during the year, and the Board are considering what steps are necessary to give effect to their recommendations.

8. The scheme for the award of State Scholarships to universities has been in existence for nearly twenty years and a review of the development of the scheme, of the administration of the awards and of the achievements of State Scholars is given in Chapter IX.

9. During the year the Board were glad to co-operate with the Ministry of Agriculture in making better known the Young Farmers' Club Movement. This movement, which has developed in a comparatively short period into a national organisation, aims to instil into the young people in rural districts a knowledge and love of the countryside and to give them a wide and intelligent interest in all aspects of the life of the community to which they belong. The attention of county education authorities was drawn, in Administrative Memorandum No. 179, to the aims and objects of the movement and it is hoped that they will, through their rural schools, do much to promote it.

The last few years have seen an increasing use of optical projectors in schools, and it was felt that the time was opportune for the publication of a pamphlet dealing with these aids. In July the Board issued, as Educational Pamphlet No. 115, "Optical Aids" with the primary object of conveying suggestions and information on the technical aspects of projection.

10. The Board's Consultative Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Will Spens completed its considerations of the reference before it and its Report on Secondary Education was published on the 30th December. This important document will fall to be dealt with in our next Report.

## CHAPTER I

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

*Note.—Except where otherwise stated the figures in this Chapter relate to the 31st March, 1938, or to the year ended 31st March, 1938.*

#### 1. Grant Regulations

1. No important changes were made during the year in the Elementary Grant Regulations, the 1937 Regulations continuing in force subject to the amendment announced in Amending Regulations No. 1, 1938, under which the provisions of Article 4 of the 1937 Regulations were extended to the payment of certain additional grants for the year 1938-39. In Circular 1464 the Board announced, after consultation with the Treasury, that the special rate of grant of 50 per cent. applicable to expenditure of a capital nature on educational reorganisation and development will be continued to cover works authorised by the Board up to 31st December, 1943, the eligibility of any scheme for the special rate of grant after the end of 1940 being conditional upon the Board being satisfied that the Authority have made all reasonable progress with the work of reorganisation before that date.

#### 2. Reorganisation

2. Satisfactory progress has continued to be made in the reorganisation of schools on the lines of the Hadow Report on the Education of the Adolescent. Altogether 1,023 departments were affected by schemes of reorganisation during the year, and a further 628 during the 9 months ended 31st December, 1938.

3. The number of departments classified as "senior" rose during the year by 112 to 3,074, and those classified as "junior" by 534 to 7,471, while the number of departments classified as "boys," "girls" and "mixed," most of which are all-age departments, fell by 701 to 12,778.

4. The number of pupils aged 11 and over in senior departments at the end of the year was 818,827 or 48.3 per cent. of the total number of pupils of this age group in public elementary schools, as compared with 805,335 (or 45.9 per cent.) on the same date in the previous year. In addition, 1,136 of the all-age departments were stated on the returns furnished by the schools to be organised with "senior divisions" providing a separate course of instruction for all pupils over 11, and educating approximately 120,000 senior pupils. Thus, approximately 55.4 per cent. of the pupils aged 11 and over were by the 31st March, 1938, either in senior departments or in

senior divisions. The position is, however, more satisfactory than these figures indicate, since there were on 31st March, 1938, 138,473 pupils aged 11 and over in reorganised junior departments pending their automatic transfer in due course to senior departments. By the 31st March, 1938, approximately 63.5 per cent. of the total number of pupils aged 11 and over were, therefore, in reorganised schools.

5. During the year the number of pupils in "junior" departments increased by 67,240 to 1,444,565. The number of pupils between 8 and 12 in these departments amounted to 1,039,664, representing 48.3 per cent. of the total number of pupils of these ages in public elementary schools.

6. The number of departments classified as "infants" was 5,901 with 1,034,864 pupils, a reduction during the year of 80 and 21,892 respectively. It continues to be the Board's policy to encourage separate infants' departments wherever the numbers warrant, and, in fact, 50 new infants' departments were opened during the year. The fall in the number of infants' departments is to be attributed in the main to the general decline in the number of infants which has been proceeding continuously during the last few years. Thirty-eight infants' departments were closed and some small infants' departments were amalgamated with departments for junior children. In such cases the Board satisfy themselves that the infants will be under the charge of an experienced woman teacher.

7. Voluntary as well as council schools again participated in the scheme of reorganisation. The number of senior departments in voluntary schools rose during the year by 11 to 379 (270 Church of England, 97 Roman Catholic and 12 others), and the number of junior departments by 264 to 3,047 (2,748 Church of England, 219 Roman Catholic and 80 others).

8. A local education authority has power under Section 34 of the Education Act, 1921, to give directions, with the approval of the Board, for the reorganisation of voluntary schools of the same denomination in the same locality, and during the year under review one proposal affecting two schools was approved by the Board under this Section.

### 3. Closure and Amalgamation of Schools

9. The problem of reducing the number of redundant schools has continued to receive the attention of local education authorities. During the year altogether 151 schools, including 54 small schools with an average attendance of less than 30, were closed as compared with 112 during the previous year. Of these 77 were Council schools, 69 were Church of England schools, 2 were Roman Catholic schools and 3 other Voluntary schools.

10. Proposals to close 7 of the smaller schools were disputed and a formal determination by the Board under Section 19 (1) of the Education Act, 1921, was therefore necessitated. The Board decided that all of these schools were unnecessary. Ninety-four larger schools were closed by agreement. Under the Education (Necessity of Schools) Act, 1933, the Board have power to determine schools with an average attendance of 30 or more to be unnecessary provided certain conditions are satisfied, notwithstanding that the closure is disputed. During the year 3 schools were determined by the Board under this Act to be unnecessary.

11. In addition to the closures mentioned above, 213 departments were discontinued through merger or amalgamation. There seems to be no doubt that these closures and amalgamations have resulted in increased efficiency and economy.

12. During the nine months ended 31st December, 1938, 117 further closures and 164 amalgamations have taken place.

### 4. School Supply and Improvements of Premises

13. Particulars of the number of schools and departments are given in Table 5 of the Statistics. During the year the number of schools increased by 11 to 20,916 and the number of departments decreased by 135 to 29,224. The net increase in the number of Council schools was 89, 77 schools being closed, 142 new schools opened and 24 existing Voluntary schools converted by transfer to the local education authorities into Council schools. The number of Roman Catholic schools increased by 14, 16 new schools being opened and 2 closed. The number of Church of England schools decreased by 89, 3 new schools being opened, 69 schools closed, while 23 were wholly transferred to local education authorities.

14. During the year preliminary proposals were approved under Section 18 of the Education Act, 1921, for 264 new Council schools, 19 Roman Catholic schools, 8 Church of England schools and one Undenominational school. During the nine months ended 31st December, 1938, further preliminary proposals were approved for 217 new Council schools and 112 new Voluntary schools.

15. The amount of capital expenditure by local education authorities approved by the Board during the year was £9,740,603 as compared with £7,577,122 during the previous year.

16. Altogether during the year 178 plans for new Council schools were approved and 704 plans for the enlargement and improvement of existing Council schools, the corresponding figures for Voluntary schools being 12 and 131.

17. Further proposals were received from local education authorities to make grants under the provisions of the Education Act, 1936, to the managers of Voluntary schools to assist the enlargement or improvement of existing schools for the benefit of senior children, or for the building of new Voluntary schools for seniors. The total number of proposals for new schools or enlargements of existing schools under Section 18 of the Education Act, 1921, sanctioned by the Board as necessary during the year ended 31st December, 1938, was 122, viz., 52 Church of England schools, 67 Roman Catholic schools and 3 schools of other denominations. It is not yet clear how many of these proposals will mature. So far, however, the Board have approved for grant the necessary expenditure by local education authorities in connection with 12 schemes under the Education Act, 1936.

18. During the year ended 31st December, 1938, 116 schools were removed from the "Black List" of schools with unsatisfactory premises, of which 67 were Voluntary and 49 Council schools. Of the 2,827 schools originally on the "Black List," 1,983 have been removed from the list either by way of closure or after having the defects removed. In addition, plans have been approved for the reconstruction, improvement or replacement of a further 114 schools.

#### 5. School Sites and Playing Fields

19. During the year ended 31st March, 1938, 344 new school sites were approved, and during the nine months ended 31st December, 1938, 274. Where possible, sites have been acquired of sufficient size to provide playing field facilities as well as for the playground and school buildings. Local education authorities may also acquire separate sites specifically for playing fields, and during the year the acquisition of 107 such sites (as compared with 92 during the previous year) was approved, of which 43 were intended to serve more than one school: during the nine months ended 31st December, 1938, a further 70 sites were approved, of which 25 were intended to serve more than one school. In addition, 232 plans for the extension of existing sites were approved during the year, and a further 200 during the nine months ended 31st December, 1938.

#### 6. Practical Instruction

20. Table 18 of the Statistics gives some particulars of the provision for practical instruction actually existing in 1938, for pupils over eleven years of age. Practical instruction in one or more subjects was given in all but 8 of the 3,074 senior departments and in 89 per cent. of the all-age departments.

#### 7. School Attendance

21. There was a further substantial decrease during the year in the number of children on the registers of the public elementary schools, the numbers falling by 88,214 to 5,035,276.

22. The number of pupils on the registers on the 31st March, 1938, aged 14 years 3 months and over was 50,234, or 4,686 less than on the same date in the previous year. Of these, 34,090 were between the ages of 14 years 3 months and 15 years, 14,508 were 15 but under 16, and 1,636 were 16 and over. Eighty-three per cent. of these older children were in senior departments or in departments with senior divisions. Of the pupils who left during the year for purposes other than further education, 93,506 as compared with 101,861 in the previous year, had remained at school for some period after reaching the age of exemption.

23. There were no additions during the year ended 31st December, 1938, to the list of authorities which have adopted the age of 15 years as the upper limit for compulsory school attendance, but the Gloucester, Workington and Barrow-in-Furness authorities, which adopted this limit for three years from 1935, have now extended it to meet the date of the general raising of the school leaving age fixed by the Education Act, 1936, and Winchester has published its intention of making a similar extension. The returns from those areas where the age has been raised by Bye-law again indicated that a considerable number of exemptions are still being sought and granted, although there is a slight increase in the percentage of pupils remaining over the age of 14 years 6 months. Prosecutions for non-attendance at school of pupils over 14 years of age were made in 87 cases and resulted in 71 convictions.

#### 8. Teaching Staff

24. The Board have continued to survey the teaching establishments proposed by local education authorities under Article 11 of the Code, and, in order to assist in the survey, authorities were asked to furnish particulars of the establishments existing at the beginning of the school year and estimates of the numbers likely to be required at the middle and end of the school year. For the year 1938-39 the total number of teaching posts was fixed after scrutiny by the Board at approximately 168,878. This compares with the figure 170,131 for the preceding year.

25. Particulars of the full-time staff as it existed for the country as a whole on 31st March, 1938, will be found in Table 8 of the Statistics. On that date there were in regular employment 131,941 certificated teachers, 24,058 uncertificated teachers and 4,905 supplementary teachers. Corresponding numbers on 31st March, 1937,

were 131,775 certificated teachers, 25,165 uncertificated teachers and 5,241 supplementary teachers. The Board are glad again to report a continuance of the improvement in the quality of the staff.

#### 9. Large Classes

26. General particulars of the size of classes will be found in Table 16 of the Statistics. It is satisfactory to record that there has been a further marked decrease in the number of over-large classes. The total number of classes with over 50 pupils on the register has fallen to 2,100 (or 1.4 per cent. of the total) thus showing a decrease of 546 during the year. A further substantial advance has also been made towards the realisation of the Board's policy of limiting all classes in Senior Departments to not more than 40 on the roll, for, on 31st March, 1938, 20,756 (out of a total of 24,706) were within that limit as compared with 19,842 a year earlier.

#### 10. Maintenance Allowances

27. For 1938-39, 53 authorities in all submitted arrangements for expenditure upon Maintenance Allowances for the Board's approval. The total amount included in this item of expenditure in the authorities' estimates for 1937-38 was £72,873 and for 1938-39, £70,488. The amount of actual expenditure for 1937-38 was £66,601. Particulars of the actual expenditure for 1938-39 are not yet available. The number of awards current on 31st March, 1937, was 6,732.

#### 11. Schools Recognised under Section 25 of the Education Act

28. These are non-local public elementary schools which receive grant direct from the Board under Article 25 of the Code and are not maintained by the local education authority. Three schools were removed from the list during the year. During the 9 months ended 31st December, 1938, 3 other schools were removed from the list and one school was added. On the 31st March, 1938, the number of pupils on the registers of the 30 schools on the list was 4,045. Separate statistics for these schools are given in Tables 22 and 23.

#### 12. Certified Efficient Schools

29. These are not public elementary schools in the technical sense of that term, but are non-grant-aided elementary schools which are open to inspection and certified to be efficient by the Board of Education under Section 170 (2) of the Education Act, 1921. During the year one school was added to the list of certified efficient schools. During the 9 months ended 31st December, 1938, one other school was added to the list and one school was removed. The number of pupils on the registers of the 18 schools on the list on the 31st March, 1938, was 1,232. Separate statistics for these schools are given in Tables 24 and 25.

#### 13. Poor Law Schools

30. The Ministry of Health is the Government Department primarily concerned with Poor Law schools, while local responsibility is vested in the appropriate Public Assistance Committee. In the case of two-thirds of the schools, however, the local administration has been assigned to the education committee of the local education authority concerned, acting as agents for the Public Assistance Committee.

The arrangement between the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education, whereby Your Majesty's Inspectors visit and report upon these schools, and annual statistics are submitted to the Board, continued during the year under review.

31. A gradual diminution in the number of Poor Law schools has been referred to in previous Reports. This process has continued during the year under review and an increasing number of children for whose maintenance Public Assistance Committees are responsible now receive their education in common with other children in ordinary public elementary schools. In 1938 there remained only 20 Poor Law schools as compared with 55 on the coming into operation of the Local Government Act, 1929. Thirteen of these 20 schools were ordinary schools, educating 2,566 children, and 7 were hospital schools, educating 210 children. The total number of children in the schools in 1938 was thus 2,776, as compared with 3,364 in 22 schools in the previous year.

32. The 13 ordinary schools were organised in 16 departments of varying size and organisation. One of the departments had less than 20 children, while at the other end of the scale two departments had over 350 each. Eight of the departments were for infants only, the others being variously organised for boys, girls, or mixed. There was only one department definitely and solely organised for senior children, but it is satisfactory to note that in all cases provision appears to have been made for various forms of practical instruction for the older children.

33. In 1938, 103 full-time teachers were employed in the schools, of whom 80 were recognised as certificated teachers and 12 as uncertificated teachers. In addition, there were 8 specialist teachers, most of whom were employed part-time.

34. Complete information with regard to the after careers of the 1,122 children who left the 13 ordinary schools during the year 1937-38 is not available, but it is known that of those who left under the age of 14, 9 proceeded to secondary schools, and 90 went to other institutions providing full-time education, while a substantial number returned to their parents and presumably continued their education at ordinary public elementary schools. Of the 361 who left after the age of 14, 241 entered employment and 83 continued in full-time instruction elsewhere.

35. The care and maintenance of Poor Law children, as distinct from their education, while not a matter which appertains to the local authority in its capacity as local education authority, may notwithstanding be undertaken by the education committee, subject to general direction and control by the Public Assistance Committee, if the latter so decide. The education committee is now acting as agent for the Public Assistance Committee in this matter in the case of 5 Counties and 22 County Boroughs.

#### 14. Canal Boat Children

36. Of the local education authorities in England and Wales, having canals in their areas, who made returns, 15, all in England, reported the presence during 1938 of children of school age on boats registered in their areas. The number of such children found on board was 619 as compared with 664 in 1937, and 597 in 1936. Legal proceedings were taken for non-attendance at school in two cases and a conviction resulted in each case.

#### 15. School Camps

37. As in previous years, arrangements were made by local education authorities for sending parties of children to camp schools and holiday camps, the visits of each party usually occupying one or two weeks and in some cases rather longer. The estimated expenditure by local education authorities on this work during the year was £53,000, as compared with £40,000 in the previous year. In addition about £20,000 was expended on school journeys, as compared with £18,000 in the previous year. The expenditure incurred by local education authorities represented only a part of the total amount spent on this work, as the grants made from public funds were supplemented by sums obtained from voluntary sources, e.g., contributions from parents and other private subscriptions. Various voluntary bodies also continue to provide facilities of a similar nature.

## CHAPTER II

### SECONDARY SCHOOLS

#### 1. School Supply and Number of Pupils

##### *A. School Year 1937-38*

1. The number of secondary schools in England and Wales recognised by the Board as eligible for grant on 31st March, 1938, was 1,398, of which 1,244 were in England, as compared with 1,393 (England 1,240) on 31st March, 1937. An analysis of the schools, by type of responsible body, is given in Table 34 of the Statistics.

2. The number of pupils on 31st March, 1938, in schools recognised for grant was 470,003 (247,389 boys and 222,614 girls), as compared with 466,245 on 31st March, 1937. The increase in school population between those dates, viz., 3,758 is attributable to the extent of 1,032 to the recognition of entirely new schools, and as to 2,726 to schools which were either on the grant list on both dates or which provided alternative accommodation for the pupils displaced by the closure of other schools.

3. The number of pupils admitted to secondary schools on the grant list during the school year 1937-38 excluding those transferred from one school to another, was 98,820, as compared with 97,115 during 1936-37. It is interesting to note that 81.3 per cent. of the pupils admitted to the grant-earning secondary school system for the first time during 1937-38 had come direct from public elementary schools, and of these considerably more than one-half, viz., 57.4 per cent., were admitted free from the payment of any tuition fee. 83.2 per cent. of the pupils admitted were between the ages of 10 and 13 years.

##### *B. School Year 1938-39*

4. Returns relating to 1st October, 1938, show that the number of pupils in grant-aided secondary schools continues to increase, there being 9,657 more than on the same date in the preceding year. The number of admissions at the beginning of the school year 1938-39 shows an increase of 2.0 per cent. as compared with the corresponding figures for 1937-38. These returns also show that the number of pupils who were pursuing a course beyond the School Certificate had increased to 41,972. The corresponding figures for 1st October, 1937, and 1936, were 40,589 and 39,597 respectively.

5. The number of secondary schools recognised by the Board as efficient, but not as eligible for grant, on 1st October, 1938, was 407 (England 387, Wales 20) containing 74,859 pupils (36,999

boys and 37,860 girls). The number of such schools on 1st October, 1937, was 397 (England 378, Wales 19) containing 73,421 pupils (36,510 boys and 36,911 girls); and the number of secondary schools recognised as efficient, whether grant-aided or not, on 1st October, 1938, was 1,814, and the number of pupils was 569,192 (298,794 boys and 270,398 girls).

6. The number of preparatory schools on 1st October, 1938, recognised as efficient was 351 containing 24,227 pupils; the number of such schools on 1st October, 1937, was 344 containing 23,568 pupils. The preparatory school figures relate only to preparatory schools conducted as independent units; a considerable number of children of preparatory school age are educated in the preparatory departments of secondary schools, and are included in the secondary school figures. As has been explained in previous Reports, the figures do not include a large number of preparatory and secondary schools which are not grant-aided, and have not applied to the Board for recognition as efficient, so that they must not be taken as giving a complete picture of the amount of secondary and preparatory school provision in the country.

## 2. Special Places and Free Places

### A. School Year 1937-38

7. In Table 37 of the Statistics the schools are classified according to the percentage of Special Places or Free Places actually awarded. It will be seen that out of 1,398 schools on 31st March, 1938, the percentage of such awards of the admissions in the previous year was between 25 and 50 for 496 schools, and between 50 and 100 for 461 schools, while in the case of 304 schools the percentage was 100.

### B. School Year 1938-39

8. The total number of admissions to these schools at the beginning of the autumn term, 1938, (including children transferred from other secondary schools), was 92,639, of which 64,190 (69.3 per cent.) were awarded Special Places or Free Places, and the remainder were ordinary fee payers. In the corresponding term of 1937, 62,740 (69.0 per cent.) were awarded Special Places or Free Places and 28,228 (31.0 per cent.) were admitted as ordinary fee payers. Of the pupils who were not admitted as ordinary fee payers in 1938, 48,695 were totally exempt from the payment of fees, 9,165 were partially exempt and 6,330 received no exemption. Corresponding figures for 1937 were 47,298, 9,324 and 6,118 respectively.

9. Of the pupils in the grant-earning schools on 1st October, 1938, 231,581 (46.9 per cent.) were totally exempt from payment

of fees, 48,073 (9.7 per cent.) received partial exemption, and 214,679 (43.4 per cent.) received no exemption. Corresponding figures for 1st October, 1937, were 225,287 (46.5 per cent.), 44,540 (9.2 per cent.) and 214,849 (44.3 per cent.) respectively.

### 3. Fees

10. In Table 38 will be found certain information concerning the standard rates of tuition fees for the school year 1937-38. The number of schools with a standard fee of six guineas or less is 73: of these, one school charges a fee of less than five guineas.

### 4. Ages of Pupils on 31st March and Length of School Life

11. Of the 470,003 pupils in attendance at grant-earning secondary schools on 31st March, 1938, 366,078 or 77.9 per cent. were between the ages of 11 and 16. The number of pupils over 16 on that date was 74,042, as compared with 75,388 in the previous year, and the proportion of such pupils was 15.7 per cent. of the whole. The number of children under 10 in the schools on 31st March, 1938, was 17,869, an increase of 492 as compared with the previous year, and amounted to 3.8 per cent. of the total number of pupils in the schools.

12. A full explanation was given in the Board's Report for 1930 of the method now adopted for calculating the length of the school life. On this basis it is found that in the year 1937-38 the average school life after the age of 11 for boys was 4 years 11 months and the leaving age 16 years 7 months, while the corresponding figures for girls were 4 years 11 months and 16 years 6 months. The figures for boys and girls together were 4 years 11 months and 16 years 7 months, compared with 4 years 10 months and 16 years 6 months for 1936-37.

### 5. Staffing

13. On 31st March, 1938, there were 25,039 full-time teachers employed in grant-aided secondary schools; of these 51.8 per cent. were men and 48.2 per cent. women. The proportion of graduates employed has increased in the case of men to 86.9 per cent., as compared with 86.8 per cent. on 31st March, 1937, and in the case of women to 69.2 per cent., as compared with 68.8 per cent. on 31st March, 1937.

### 6. Size of Classes

14. The number of classes over the normal limit of 30 was 4,747 on 1st October, 1938, as compared with 4,684 on 1st October, 1937. 59 of the former contained more than 35 pupils, as compared with

78 in the previous year, 79 in 1936 and 169 in 1935. It may be noted that the average number of pupils per class in all secondary schools on 1st October, 1938, was 24.6.

#### 7. Sixth Form Work

15. For the school year ended 31st July, 1938, the Sixth Form grant payable under the current regulations has given to 119 schools recognised for direct grant, but not in receipt of the grant payable under the Regulations in force prior to the school year 1935-36 for recognised Advanced Courses, and to 33 schools formerly in receipt of the advanced course grant, in respect of some 1,470 and 1,730 pupils, amounts approximately of £22,450 and £21,150 respectively. Eighty-four other schools received grant at the standard rates, or, alternatively, grant at the former advanced course rate diminished by 30 per cent.—whichever was the more favourable to the school—in respect of some 2,920 pupils, amounting approximately to £42,100.

#### 8. Amendment to the Regulations

16. During the year under review the Regulations for Secondary Schools were amended, in respect of schools in receipt of direct grant, so as to extend the normal capitation grant to pupils who, admitted to such school for the first time during the school year, were at the beginning of the school year between ten and eleven years of age.

#### 9. School Libraries

17. Towards the end of 1936 the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees, with the full co-operation and approval of the Board and of the Secretary of State for Scotland, set up a Standing Committee to advise on libraries in secondary schools. Its purpose is to collect and make available information on the organisation and use of libraries in secondary schools in this and other countries, to advise on building and equipment and the selection of books, and to encourage the better use and further development of libraries in secondary schools in this country and in Scotland.

Requests for information and advice have been received from a number of schools and, in some cases, visits have been paid by members of the Committee.

#### 10. Further Education or Occupation of Pupils leaving Secondary Schools

18. Information on this subject is given in Table 46. Particulars of the occupations taken up have been given in greater detail than hitherto.

Information on the placing in employment of secondary school boys and girls through the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Employment Committees, Local Committees for Juvenile Employment and other Organisations, is contained in the Annual Report for 1938 of the Ministry of Labour.

19. *Pupils proceeding to Universities.*—Particulars of pupils leaving secondary schools on the grant list to proceed direct to Universities are given in Table 50 of the Statistics.

20. The Board have obtained certain information concerning the previous place of education of candidates:—

- (i) awarded open entrance scholarships and exhibitions during the year ended 31st August, 1938, by Colleges at Oxford and Cambridge Universities; and
- (ii) placed in Class I in the 1938 examinations of the Oxford University Final Honours Schools and the Cambridge University Triposes Part II.

The information is summarised in Tables 52 and 53. It will be seen that 437 out of 798 open entrance scholarships and exhibitions awarded at Oxford and Cambridge were won by pupils at grant-earning secondary schools. Of the 437, 67.7 per cent. were won by pupils who paid no fees in those schools and 65.4 per cent. by pupils who had been previously educated in public elementary schools.

Of the 293 candidates who were placed in Class I of the Final Honours Schools or Triposes, 156 (including 66 State Scholars) received their previous education at grant-aided secondary schools and 102 at other secondary schools in England and Wales. The First Classes awarded to these 258 candidates were distributed between the several faculties as follows:—

	From grant-earning secondary schools.	From other secondary schools.
Science (including Engineering) .. ..	45	19
History .. .. ..	25	16
Mathematics .. ..	32	12
Classics or Lit. Hum. .. ..	25	21
Other Languages .. ..	12	9
Other Subjects .. .. ..	17	25

#### 11. Miscellaneous

21. *Full Inspections.*—In 1938, 229 schools were fully inspected by the Board, 39 for the first time. These figures compare with 216 and 49 during 1937. Of the schools fully inspected, 222 were

in England and 7 in Wales. In addition, there were 4 Interim Inspections of schools in England in respect of which reports were issued to the governing bodies of the schools.

#### 12. Secondary School Examinations

22. As regards the grant-earning schools it is interesting to note that the average number of pupils who sat for an approved First Examination per school sending candidates was 45.0, and the corresponding figure for an approved Second Examination was 8.4. Comparable figures five years ago were 41.2 and 9.2 respectively.

Expressed as a percentage of the pupils aged 11 years and over in all the grant-earning schools, the total number of pupils from those schools who sat for an approved First Examination was 14.4 and for an approved Second Examination was 2.5.

23. The following is an account of the work of the Secondary School Examinations Council for the year 1938:—

The Council held five meetings and its Standing Committee also met on two separate occasions.

The Council have to record with deep regret the death of Mr. W. H. Jenkinson, who has represented the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools since the Council's reconstitution in 1936.

Other changes on the Council were the appointment of the Reverend E. F. Bonhote as a nominee of the President of the Board of Education, in place of Dr. W. N. Varley, and the appointment of Professor J. H. Priestley on the nomination of the Northern Universities Joint Matriculation Board, in place of Dr. A. W. Pickard-Cambridge.

The number of candidates entered for the First Examination in Midsummer, 1938, was 77,010, of whom 54,850, or 71.2 per cent., obtained certificates. The number of candidates entered for the Second Examination was 13,201, of whom 9,513, or 72.1 per cent., obtained certificates.

Further statistics of these examinations, similar to those included in previous reports of the Council, are given in Table 51.

#### *The First and Second School Examinations.*

24. Of the many branches of educational theory and practice, which have been studied in the past twenty years, none has received closer attention than the subject of Examinations. The subject has been approached from three separate angles. In the first place, the Secondary School Examinations Council, in its periodical Investigations, has travelled beyond the mere machinery and practice of individual Examining Bodies into the theory of the First and Second School Examinations. In the second place, the

International Institute Examinations Inquiry has published a series of valuable studies on particular aspects of the technique of examining. In the third place, individuals like Professor C. W. Valentine and the experimental psychologists have made important researches into the reliability of examinations as a test of abilities.

25. One result of these inquiries has been to bring out in clear relief the complications of School Examinations. To take one example, the pupil who enters for the First School Examination has at least two objects in view: he wants to know what progress he has made in the various school subjects, and he hopes to obtain a Certificate good enough to get him a job. But logically these two objects are fundamentally distinct. An examination, the sole object of which was to test progress would, one might expect, arrange all the candidates in a graded order of merit without question of Pass or Failure. On the other hand, in an examination designed solely to select pupils suitably qualified for this or that type of employment, it is of no interest to determine what progress has been made by a particular pupil; the main question is—is the pupil competent in a particular form of practical skill? In such an examination, therefore, the proper division would logically be into Passes and Failures, and there is no obvious reason why all the pupils in any one year should not pass or fail.

26. There is another kind of complication. What are we trying to test by School Examinations—progress in general education or progress in subjects especially selected by the pupils as being appropriate to his tastes or abilities? In the past, emphasis was laid on general education and the object of the First School Examination was to test progress towards that ideal. To-day the pendulum has swung over, and, with a shift of emphasis from the subject to the pupil, there is a tendency to concentrate on special tastes and special abilities.

27. In practice, the First and Second School Examinations are in the nature of a compromise; in a greater or less degree several functions are combined in the Examinations and the system works tolerably well. The trouble arises when one or the other function upsets the equilibrium of the Examination; that is a position which may arise in different ways, and when it does arise, means have to be found of restoring the balance.

28. In the year to which this Report refers two interesting examples of this phenomenon have become prominent. At the time when the First School Examination was instituted in 1917, Secondary Schools worked on the basis of a normal curriculum based partly on tradition, partly on experience. In spite of criticisms, that curriculum was a good one and it was greatly to the credit of our Secondary Schools that, in the decade or so between

1904 and the Great War, they had succeeded in establishing so valuable an instrument of education. But in the past twenty years many considerations—educational and sociological alike—have emphasised the importance of individual tastes and abilities and the folly of compelling pupils to persevere in studies for which they have no aptitude.

29. The First School Examination, based on the generally accepted curriculum of Secondary Schools, has required hitherto, as a condition for the award of a School Certificate, a pass in five subjects including at least one from each of Group I (English subjects), Group II (Foreign Languages) and Group III (Mathematics and Science). Results were shown in two grades—Pass and Credit—and successful candidates were obliged to show at least one credit in order to qualify for a Certificate.

30. Pressure has been exercised for many years to abolish altogether the Group system and to allow pupils complete freedom to offer any five subjects they liked. It would be a mistake to think that the pressure came only from inexperienced or amateur quarters; on the contrary the programme of complete freedom was advocated by many of the most sober and experienced critics. Nevertheless it is perhaps well that, in the end, the forces of compromise prevailed, and, under the new conditions recommended by the Secondary School Examinations Council and approved by the Board in Circular 1463, successful candidates for the School Certificate must pass in English Language and in five other subjects taken from at least two Groups, of which Group II or Group III must be one. The requirement of a credit is withdrawn and in future the performances of pupils in each subject will be shown on the Certificate in three grades—Pass, Credit and Very Good.

31. It is to be hoped that under the new conditions, which will be adopted by 1940, the School Certificate will be able to perform the various functions required of it. One thing further will be necessary, if this result is to be achieved. The present practice, which still survives in one University, of issuing Matriculation Certificates will need to be reconsidered. These Certificates, awarded to candidates who pass with credit in five subjects in the First School Examination, have largely replaced the School Certificate as a test of employment qualifications. In this way the First Examination has tended to become a competitive instead of a qualifying examination, and the balance of the system has been seriously upset. The new Certificate should provide employers with all the information they require and it would be deplorable if they continued to impose on candidates for employment a test which is incompatible with the principles on which the Approved First School Examination is based.

32. In passing to the Second School Examination we find a somewhat different problem. The Higher Certificate Examination is

designed to test a certain part of the work of pupils at the advanced stage. But it has also to provide machinery for the award of State and, in some cases, University Scholarships and Local Education Authority awards. How far can it perform both functions satisfactorily? How far can the equilibrium of the examination be maintained? That is the major question to which the Investigation into the Higher School Certificate held in 1938 was addressed.

33. At the close of the year the Report of this extremely important Investigation had been drafted but not finally approved, and it is not possible, therefore, to give any summary of its conclusions. It may be said, however, that, apart from the major issue with which the Investigators were concerned, many other problems connected with the examination have been discussed.

34. One such problem is of sufficient general interest to call for more than a passing comment in this Report. Most people are aware that in any examination designed to test scholastic progress the examiners are faced with the problem of equating performances in different subjects. How this is done; what stages are necessary to equate the standards in various subjects and in different years; and how the maximum amount of reliability can be assured—these are questions on which most people are ignorant. The following account of the process of "Standardisation" is extracted from a note prepared for the use of the Investigators by one of Your Majesty's Inspectors:—

*Note on the Standardisation of Marks.*

"In a Higher Certificate Examination various problems arise calling for some attempt at equating marking standards. Thus it is clearly important that the pass and distinction levels in any one subject shall be kept as steady as possible from year to year; that, when numbers are so large that different examiners have to deal with answers to the same questions, the final mark allotted to any given candidate shall be independent of the examiner who has handled his paper; and that there shall be a reasonable equivalence between the standards called for in the different subjects. These problems do not differ fundamentally, and, to be explicit, the methods employed will be discussed in terms of the last—that is the problem of equating standards in different subjects in the same examination.

It is in the first place necessary to define what is meant by an equal standard in, say, English and Mathematics. Does 90 per cent. given by one examiner, in Mathematics, imply the same degree of excellence as 90 per cent. given by another examiner in English? Even if we are not worrying about numerical marks, but are aiming at a double star system like that used in the London Higher School Certificate Examination the same question arises:—Does a candidate have to be as outstanding in Mathematics to gain a double star as he does in English? It seems clear that the examiner is entitled to, and indeed must have, some closer description of what is to be meant by excellence, and various other grades, before he can give his verdict. A double star or a mark of 90 per cent. are terms that are in practice too vague, and may easily imply different standards in the hands of different examiners.

Now any absolute answer to this problem seems to be impossible. The verdict of any examiner is bound to be relative either to the particular group he is examining or to all candidates at this stage that he has examined during

his career. It is natural then to make a comparative definition of standards; to say that a candidate is to have a double star, say, if he is among the top 10 per cent. of the candidates, and that he is to fail, if he is in the bottom 25 per cent. of the candidates. Such a definition is clearly sufficiently precise for us to handle, but before describing the methods based on it, let us consider some of its implications. First, it assumes that the group of candidates concerned in any one subject in any one examination is sufficiently large and representative to enable us to depend on the standards fixed in this way. Even if the candidates are numerous enough and sufficiently representative to enable us so to fix the pass level they may be insufficient to fix satisfactorily the high or low standards, and the top candidates, even out of batches of 1,000 each, may vary considerably in ability from year to year, as far as comparisons of this kind are possible. Secondly, it assumes that outstanding ability is equally common—or equally rare—among the candidates in every subject. On this point, owing to lack of precision in the meaning of the terms employed, one could argue for a long time without reaching any conclusion.

It seems to come to this, that marks in themselves are merely a device to enable an examiner to analyse the performances of the candidates and to put them in order of merit. It is only on the basis of this order of merit that further comparisons are possible and then only with adequate groups. It is with this order that the standardiser deals.

It is very important to understand properly the relation between examiner and standardiser. The standardiser does not amend the examiner's orders of merit, but takes them as the basis of all his work. It is of fundamental importance that these orders shall be based on proper considerations in the first place, for, if not, no amount of labour on the part of the statistician can remedy the faulty data with which he is supplied. Indeed, he may be magnifying differences that are spurious. If sound results are to be achieved, then a prime requirement is that the papers shall have been set and marked in such a way as to differentiate reliably and adequately and on proper grounds between the candidates.

Let us see how these orders of merit are handled in the standardising process. In the first place, it is clearly unsatisfactory to compare mere crude positions in different orders of merit. Thus the candidate who stands 50th on the list in a group of 100 must obviously not be compared with the candidate who stands 50th on the list in a group of 1,000. The first is half way down his group and the second only 1/20th of the way down. This difficulty is easily overcome by converting the actual order to a percentage of the number in the group, and saying that the first is 50 per cent. of the way down the list and the second 5 per cent. Usually, however, in order to attach higher numbers to the better candidates we work not from the top of the list but from the bottom and, in the case quoted, we should say that the first candidate is 50 per cent. of the way up the list and the second 95 per cent. An order expressed in this way is called a percentile rank. More precisely, the percentile rank of a candidate is the percentage of candidates who are below him in the list in order of merit. In what follows we shall refer to percentile rank and not the crude order. Slightly different definitions of percentile rank are sometimes adopted, but the exact definition matters little for our purpose as long as we are consistent. We shall adhere throughout to the one stated.

Having thus put the orders on a comparable basis, can we use these percentile ranks as our standard marks and add them for various subjects to get an aggregate mark for each candidate? We could, of course, do this; but, on such a system, in any individual paper the mark difference between the first and the tenth candidate would equal that between the 51st and 60th—a state of affairs not in conformity with the usual conception of the distribution of ability, which would lead us to give much greater relative weight to the top candidates.

In order to get nearer to the kind of distribution of ability that we think expresses the truth, it is customary not to use the percentile ranks themselves, but to allot to each percentile rank a 'standard mark,' arranged so as to give the desired degree of bunching. The actual choice of the standard scale is arbitrary. There is, at any rate in an examination of the Higher School Certificate type, no theoretical reason in favour of any particular scale. The actual scale used must be an expression of policy, deciding as it does the extent to which outstanding performance in one subject is to balance comparative weakness in another. The more the standard scale strings out candidates at the top, the greater is the opportunity for outstanding performance in one subject to compensate for comparative weakness in another.

One Examining Body adopts the following scale:—

Percentile Rank	Standard Mark
99.6	340
99.0	320
97.9	300
96.5	288
95.0	281
92.5	272
90.0	266
85.0	256
80.0	248
50.0	200
20.0	152
10.0	134

and so on.

The result of using this scale is to give 5 per cent. of the candidates 281 marks or more, 10 per cent. of them 266 or more, 15 per cent. of them 256 or more, and so on. That is—5 per cent. of them get between 266 and 281 (a range of 15 marks); 5 per cent. have marks between 266 and 256 (a range of 10 marks); 5 per cent. have marks between 256 and 248 (a range of 8 marks). The bunching effect is clear. The actual process of arriving at the standard mark of each candidate can be carried out easily, where large numbers are concerned, with the help of graphs."