

## II.—SYLLABUS OF INSTRUCTION.

## PREPARATORY DIVISION.

23. The subjects of instruction in the Preparatory Division shall be English, handwork (including drawing) and other manual occupations, singing, games and other suitable physical exercises, and arithmetic.

In English the chief object shall be the teaching of the spoken language, as by simple stories, and by conversations founded upon the children's own observation of simple objects and phenomena and of pictures. The children should be led to express themselves freely and naturally, not only by the reproduction of stories told to them and by answers to questions, but spontaneously as suggested by their own natural activities and imagination. Opportunity may be taken to inculcate very elementary ideas of morality and of health, the former through stories having a moral purpose (the moral need not be expressed), the latter by simple talks—*e.g.*, upon the use of a tooth-brush. Special effort should be made at this stage to secure purity of speech in regard to clear articulation, and as far as possible to purity of vowel sounds and to the correct use of the vocal organs; but this should be based upon imitation mainly. It is important, therefore, that teachers should themselves adopt a natural style of speaking, and should set good examples of clearness and purity of speech. The formal teaching of reading and writing is less important at this stage, and perhaps at any stage, than the teaching of spoken English; in Class P1 the teaching of these subjects will for the most part be incidental to the lessons in speech, the reading being chiefly from the blackboard or wall-board or from reading-sheets, the writing being in chalk or pencil on wall-boards or paper; no lessons in spelling need be given except such as are involved in simple phonetic word-building, in copying the teachers' script, or in building words with movable letters. In P2 the teaching of reading and writing will be more systematic, but pen and ink should not be used, nor should rigid accuracy of form be insisted upon, so long as reasonable neatness and legibility are secured; spelling should be taught mainly by the copying of sentences in script. In both classes the recitation of suitable poetry should form a feature in the work.

As the work in English will be based upon the child's attempts at self-expression in language, and upon his observation and imagination, so the handwork, drawing, and other occupations, and the physical games and exercises, will be directed to the development of the child through his other activities; the narration of what he has been doing in his games and occupations will also afford fresh occasion for exercise in speech. The methods of the so-called "new kindergarten," which include modelling, and drawing, and simple dramatic games, should be employed as far as the staffing will permit; and the importance of singing and other music for its own sake, as well as for voice-training and for the training it gives in rhythm and in rhythmic movements, should not be overlooked. The physical exercises should conform to the general scheme as set forth in the Regulations for Physical Training; they should in all cases include simple breathing exercises, but otherwise suitable games are of more importance at this stage than merely formal drill.

The teaching of arithmetic in the Preparatory Division should be largely incidental, especially in P1, to the occupations and games. In P2 the composition of the numbers up to 20 should be known, and the children should be taught to perform mentally and orally every kind of operation with these numbers that is within the mental powers of children of their age and development, and similarly to apply the power thus acquired to concrete examples.

The aim of the instruction in handwork and drawing at this stage should be to awaken and develop the faculty of observation, to train children to use hands and eyes in harmony, freely and correctly at will, and express graphically in suitable media the appearance (form and colour) of easily understood objects. Incidentally, the work should lead up to the work of the Junior Division. The exercises should include the representation of very simple familiar objects, both natural and fashioned, in mass and on a large scale, with coloured crayons and chalk; the free expression through illustrative and imaginative drawing of ideas formed in other lessons, particularly in nature lessons; modelling in clay or plasticine, and other forms of hand and eye training founded on sound educational principles; elementary pattern-making; drawing lines of given length with rulers. Outline should be taught through mass, and the brush and pencil should not be introduced until reasonable skill in handling crayons and chalk has been acquired by the pupils. Small objects are in general to be avoided. See also clause 31.