

Conversations upon pictures, topics familiar to the child, plants, birds, animals, insects, simple natural phenomena, and generally topics introduced through the spontaneous interests of the day, at home and at school. Stories, fairy-tales and folk-tales, nursery rhymes, and simple poems to be told to the class by the teacher and retold by the children. Dramatization and reproduction in drawing and handwork. Throughout the lessons the aim should be to train the children to talk individually, and the more reticent children should receive special encouragement. Systematic speech training should be given.

(b) *Written Expression.*—While written expression at this stage is not mandatory, children should not be discouraged from occasionally expressing themselves in writing. Free written composition in the higher Preparatory Classes is by no means beyond the capacity of the pupils.

READING.—No particular method of teaching reading is prescribed, but it is suggested that the reading-material should consist at first of words as names of things or actions, then of simple sentences arising from the conversation lessons. The next stage should consist of the analysis of suitable words into their component phonic sounds, and the synthesis of these sounds to form whole words, both being associated with the interpretation at sight of words and sentences on the blackboard, on individual reading-sheets, or in reading-books, of which each child should read as many as possible. Reading aloud must form an essential part of the reading practice.

Teachers are required to set out in their scheme of work the various stages in the method adopted to secure clearness of utterance, fluency, and expression.

RECITATION.—Recitation and dramatization of selected nursery-rhymes, simple poems, and songs where suitable.

SPELLING.—Word-building of a simple character, such as by the use of carded letters and phonograms. Word-matching, such as matching names and things, or names and pictures, or words and words. Phonic exercises in forming words of regular construction.

WRITING.—Print-script in chalk, crayon, or pencil; printing letters, figures, words, phrases, and short sentences. It is suggested that the higher classes in this division might commence free-arm drill on blackboard to secure rhythm of movement and co-ordination of hand and eye, with a view to the transition to a cursive form of handwriting in the standard classes.

STANDARD I.

LANGUAGE :—

(a) *Speech Training.*—Definite instruction to be continued in order to secure the correct use of the vocal organs, purity of speech, clear articulation, and purity of vowel sounds. Exercises to be planned by the teacher to meet the needs of her own pupils and to be clearly indicated in the scheme of work. Breathing and voice exercises as prescribed in the Music Syllabus.

(b) *Oral Expression.*—The oral lessons are to be continued, children being expected to show advance upon the stage set for the Preparatory Division. Reproduction and discussion of the subject-matter of reading lessons, and of poetry. Talks on peoples and modes of life in other lands, on natural history, on interesting persons in New Zealand, British, and European history. Free and uninterrupted expression should be aimed at, and children should be encouraged to ask questions. Correction of errors to be made unobtrusively, or reserved till the end of the lesson.

(c) *Written Composition.*—Oral composition as indicated above to form the main portion of the work, but children to be encouraged to write upon familiar and interesting topics. While some attempt should be made towards securing a reasonable degree of formal accuracy, freedom of expression should be the first consideration. Original efforts to be encouraged.

(d) *Formal Language.*—Use of capital letters and full stops. Correct use, solely by example, of *is* and *are*, *was* and *were*, *did* and *done*, *saw* and *seen*, *their* and *there*. Easy synthetic exercises in using nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Repetition exercises to eradicate common errors in children's oral and written speech. Examination and imitation of good models in a very simple way.

READING.—Oral and silent reading of the following: (a) *The School Journal*; (b) other books to be read in class either silently or aloud. Reading of suitable poems should be included, and dramatization encouraged to assist comprehension and appreciation.

RECITATION.—Poems for recitation should be selected for their literary value and their power to appeal to the child at this stage. Children to be encouraged to select and to memorize pieces for themselves. A record of poems read and studied should be kept. The work should be correlated with drawing and singing where this can be done in a natural and spontaneous manner.