

Report of H.M. Inspectors on
CARR LANE COUNTY SCHOOL, WILLERBY

Inspected on 2nd, 3rd and 4th November, 1954.

Willerby is a prosperous urban area adjoining the city of Kingston-upon-Hull. The school opened in 1937, is pleasantly situated and has well-kept gardens and a playing field. In addition to the original two-storey building there are prefabricated classrooms; two were provided in 1940 and four more in 1948. There is a shortage of storage facilities in the school. The main building which was redecorated in 1950 is very well maintained. A good collection of pictures and the presence of plants and flowers add to the attractiveness of the school. The prefabricated buildings have not been decorated and some of them are shabby; the walls of the lavatories in particular should receive attention. An automatic flushing device would be preferable for the urinals.

Since 1950 one class has used a Methodist hall, ten minutes' walk from the school. Although adequate as temporary accommodation, it has definite disadvantages; the lighting is poor and there is little outdoor space. The oldest junior class used this hall and the same mistress has been in charge here for several years.

The school has on roll 476 children of five to fifteen years of age. About 30 per cent of the age group usually leave at eleven years to go to grammar schools and a few children go earlier to independent schools. When thirteen years, one or two children are transferred to grammar schools and a few also go then to technical schools. In general the total number of children leaving this school before they are fifteen years of age is greater than the number leaving in the final year.

There are four classes of infants with a total of 99 children, a number which will increase later in the school year. The 252 juniors are in seven classes and the 125 seniors are in four classes. It seems unfortunate that the organisation does not provide for five senior classes since, under the present arrangement, form S2 contains first and second year pupils, form S3 has second and third year and form S4 has third and fourth years; this mixing of the age groups makes teaching unnecessarily difficult. The staffing would have allowed for another form.

One of the four infant mistresses has special responsibility for the infant classes. This mistress has worked thoughtfully and energetically and has enlisted the full co-operation of her colleagues. Together they go far to provide the children with opportunities for all-round individual development. In the gay, inviting classroom there is a good variety of materials with which the children experiment and which, guided by the staff, they use with increasing skill. As might be expected in such an area, the boys and girls talk freely and well. They have ample opportunities in school for extending their powers of speech and in due course they acquire the skills of reading and writing. The reading books, however, need to be supplemented by a collection of the 'library' type. Various activities provide occasions for writing and some very good work is done. An interesting and carefully planned scheme of number work has been evolved, which ensures a wide basis of experience and a thorough understanding of the basic processes. The staff are sincerely concerned to provide musical experience for the children; good use could be made of a portable gramophone.

The methods of teaching in the infant and lower junior classes represent an almost complete dichotomy of ideas. One mistress continues the varied writing done by the older infants but, particularly with the less able children, there is very little continuity in the work. The Head Master provides short, useful schemes of work but the teaching in the classrooms often bears little relation to the schemes. Except where there is specialisation there is little evidence of continuity in the junior and senior classes. The time-tables for the juniors and seniors provide for only six periods a day after an early morning form period; the advantages of seven periods were discussed with the Head Master. Religious instruction is taken conscientiously according to the Authority's Agreed Syllabus.

The juniors read satisfactorily. There is, however, a shortage of books, including reference books. Careful written work is done, but it includes little individual writing and only in a few cases are children making their own records. English exercises, not necessarily requiring much thought, are done frequently. Interesting work has been done for several years by a third year class on a week's school journey. Competent standards are achieved in mechanical arithmetic and in one or two classes efforts are made to make it a lively subject in which language and oral discussion play a proper part. Much of the work in English and Arithmetic, particularly with the older juniors, is directed rather narrowly towards the grammar school selection examination. Intelligent children who might go much further than the requirements of the examination do not have sufficient opportunities in school to read widely, to write freely or indeed to be really challenged in thought. With this type of teaching the less able children do not seem to flourish either.

The standard of written English in the lower senior classes is not high and in form S4 rather more pupils of thirteen and fourteen years of age than one would expect are writing with only a moderate degree of accuracy. This may be partly due to the fact that, in lessons other than English, only one or two members of staff give the boys and girls opportunities to read and write, others preferring to give notes to be copied. Some children have too little time allowed for English; those taking French in S3 have only two or three periods a week. Very little time is allowed for reading and the boys and girls do not enjoy a wide enough variety of English literature. French was introduced a few years ago and this is superimposed on the time-table for small groups of pupils. The teaching is mainly oral and within the limits imposed by the conditions, is done well. The small number of pupils involved, however, makes it doubtful whether its inclusion in the curriculum is fully justified; at the time of the inspection the fourth year pupils were merged with those in their third year to form a class of ten. Arithmetic is conscientiously taught; to a small extent, other branches of mathematics are introduced, but at present there is no over-all plan and little actual achievement.

The music in the junior and senior classes is in good hands and the children show a lively interest in it. They sing well and with enjoyment, and there is a flourishing recorder group. A peripatetic teacher is taking violin classes with sixteen of the children.

Promising work was seen in art lessons in junior and senior classes. An interesting variety of materials is used for needlework in junior classes and the stitchery done by some girls is excellent. With the senior girls the subject has had a broken course and the present teacher has not yet completed her first year. This may account for the lack of thoughtful progression in the syllabus and the moderate standard of work achieved. More teaching apparatus and specimens are needed. Some good knitting was seen but little is attempted on the decorative side of needlework. The custom of waiting for the girls to bring their own materials and patterns seems to cause considerable delay in starting the work.

Science taught to the senior forms captures the interest of the boys, particularly. The content of the course is comprehensive but careful regular co-ordination with the gardening work is needed. Gardening is included in the time-tables for all classes. In the junior classes it might be linked with nature study. The time allowance for the seniors varies; it is one weekly period in forms S1 and S2 and the whole form works together. Those conditions make for undue time being spent on theory isolated from practice. The pupils' note-books both in science and gardening consist mainly of copied notes and diagrams. The master-in-charge of the gardening has put a great deal of time and energy into providing the housing for the pigs and poultry that have been kept at the school and organised on a club basis. At present there are no livestock clubs. If it is decided that it is educationally desirable for livestock to be kept, then the position should not depend entirely on the state of the commercial market, and the building should be of better quality than at present. The gardening equipment includes a greenhouse and frames, and a mechanical cultivator which has been bought by the school. The proper storage of tools has not yet been completed. Both science and gardening suffer because there is no room with adequate facilities for the classroom work.

The hall, the playgrounds and the field are used for physical education and a variety of work is done. The usual team games are played. Some fixed apparatus was purchased at the time of the Queen's coronation and this is freely used by the children.

The handicraft room suffers from the fact that it is an ordinary prefabricated classroom, without a store. The overcrowding of the room is increased by its use for evening classes and for storing science apparatus. The tools and equipment are well maintained, although the bench tops are in a poor state. The time allowance is adequate for the four-year woodwork course. In addition, small groups of older boys have opportunities for doing light metalwork which includes the making of science apparatus; this development is to be commended. Although the boys work well, the woodwork in the first year could include more finished articles and that for the older boys could be more varied in type.

Girls from forms S3 and S4 each have half a day's housecraft at Cottingham Girls' School.

A definite effort is made to encourage the pupils of form S4 to be responsible people, and various duties and responsibilities are given to them. Girls act as librarians; they issue books to children in the senior and upper junior classes. The library is at present housed in a small upstairs room and is opened at set periods when the librarians are present. It is proposed to remove the reference books to a more central position where they may be better used; even so there are not nearly enough to meet the school's needs.

A kitchen-dining room was built in November, 1948. The dining room is well kept and very attractive; the meals are well served.

The juniors and seniors have assembly at the beginning of the day and the infants come together later. Music plays an appropriate part in the assemblies.

Conclusion

This is a school with many advantages and many potentialities. The Head Master has been in charge since it opened and as it has developed he has planned for its pupils an education suited to their needs. He is nearing the end of a long and responsible career, but he can still consider the development and co-ordination of those growing points within his school upon which its future development might be based.

