

THE  
**BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING**  
WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
**THE NURSING RECORD**  
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,027.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1907.

Vol. XXXI

**Editorial.**

THE MEDICAL INSPECTION OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.

The Section of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907 which concerns the medical education of school children and which comes into force on January 1st, 1908, is an excellent piece of legislation and there is no section of the community which will welcome it more heartily than the school nurses. A memorandum has recently been issued by the Board of Education explaining the scope and purpose of the Act, which merits careful study on the part of all who realise how much physical deterioration can be prevented, and the standard of the national health raised by attention to the health of the children who during their early and plastic years come under the control of the Board of Education in the Public Elementary Schools.

The new Act places on the local education authority the duty of providing "for the medical inspection of the children and the power to make such arrangements as may be sanctioned by the Board of Education for attending to the health and physical condition of the children educated in the public elementary schools."

So far, the Memorandum of the Board of Education points out, such medical inspection as has been carried out hitherto has been concerned only or chiefly with children selected from the school or class as being obviously defective or diseased.

The present Act is "founded on a recognition of the close connection which exists between the physical and mental condition of the children and the whole process of education. It recognises the importance of a satisfactory environment, physical and educational, and by bringing into greater prominence the effect of environ-

ment upon the personality of the individual child seeks to secure ultimately for every child, normal or defective, conditions of life compatible with that full and effective development of its organic functions, its special senses and its mental powers which constitute a true education . . . The Board view the entire subject of school hygiene not as a speciality or as a group of specialities existing by and of themselves but as an integral factor in the health of the nation."

The Memorandum states that the Board are convinced that the work of medical inspection cannot be properly accomplished by medical men without assistance from the teacher, the school nurse, and the parents.

The Board of Education "are satisfied that this work offers a great field of valuable service for the school nurse, and they recommend that wherever practicable Education Authorities should secure especially in rural districts, the benefit and true economy which may thus be obtained."

The above authority has decided that not less than three inspections of the children during school life are necessary to secure the results desired, broadly speaking on admission, and at 7 and 10 years of age, also a fourth inspection is desirable before the child leaves school. This is the minimum amount and is not intended to exclude other medical work which the Board trust will be undertaken by Local Education Authorities according to their abilities and opportunities.

The Board emphasises the fact that it is of the utmost importance to remember that baths should be utilised not merely for the immediate and obvious purpose of cleansing the bodies of the children but also as a humanising influence and as a means of inducing habits and instincts of cleanliness and inculcating practical lessons in the value of personal hygiene and in self respect. The same is true of the daily cleansing of teeth.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)