

Schools

Curriculum links

The resource can contribute - either explicitly or implicitly - to the study of History, Art, Science (materials), English (reading and comprehension) at KS1.

Overview

Archive section

This episode explores changes in schools which have happened within living memory in the UK, ie within about the last 75 years. It covers:

- changes in classroom layout, from children sitting at rows of wooden desks to now sitting at shared tables
- teachers once using chalk to write on blackboards, then using overhead projectors and now interactive whiteboards and screens
- changes in technology, from schools once having a single television or computer to now having several computers and other devices
- that the design of schools has changed, eg to have bigger windows allowing more light.

The quiz

The quiz shows three classrooms from contrasting decades. The children are invited to use the information from the archive section to identify the 1990s classroom.

The interview

The interview is with education leader and former headteacher, Tarun Kapur.



Tarun recalls his time at school in the 1960s. He remembers that he used a small wooden desk with a lid and he kept his books inside. He used an inkwell and pen to write and the teacher used chalk and a blackboard.

Tarun remembers PE lessons and the class listening to the radio for dance or gymnastics lessons.

Tarun considers old and new schools. He explains that new schools have big windows to allow more light, often have colourful displays on the walls and that there are plenty of computers and screens to help children learn.

Tarun suggests we can find out about schools in the past by asking adults to describe their school days or by looking in information in books.

Follow-up activities

Questions sheet

Use the [questions sheet](#) and invite some parents or grandparents to visit your classroom. Practise the questions with the children before the interview day and ask the visitors about their memories of school. If this is not possible, you could use this as a home learning activity.

Sorting worksheet

Use the [sorting worksheet](#) to match school items with the right decades. Some children might add information with other facts they know about schools. You might want to discuss with the children that a lot of these things will match with more than one decade.

In the past worksheet

Use the [‘In the past’](#) worksheet and invite the children to make a list of things they can see around their classroom.

Write or draw the items in the ‘In my classroom’ column. Then ask the children if they think this was used in the past or if something else was used. Write or draw this in the ‘In the past’ column.

Other areas of the curriculum

Art (Key Stage 1)

Use drawing, painting and sculpture to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination.

Use some outdoor photographs of your school to inspire your children to create their own paintings of a school scene.

Look at the height of the buildings compared with the height of other things in the photos - eg the height of a tree or a fence around the school.

Ask the children to use a pencil to draw a horizontal groundline across their page first.

Then notice what shape the buildings are. Are they triangular? Are they rectangular? What shapes are the windows? Add the shapes using pencil to make the sides of the buildings first.

Then use paint to add colours and extra details to the school scenes.

Science (Year 1)

Describe the simple physical properties of a variety of everyday materials; compare and group together a variety of everyday materials on the basis of their simple physical properties.

Talk about materials and think about all the places where they are found around school - eg glass, wood, metal, plastic, brick.

Write down the objects made from each material - eg you might have plastic for dinner trays, chairs, counting cubes, rulers, water bottles, etc.

Discuss what makes plastic useful for all these different items. You could talk about properties like strength, being able to create different shapes, being rigid and being impermeable (for cups and water bottles), etc.

English (Year 1 and 2)

Develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by: listening to and discussing a wide range of poems, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently; being encouraged to link what they read or hear read to their own experiences.

You could read some school-related poetry to your class. Can the children identify anything in the poem that reveals whether the poem was written about schools in the past or schools in the present?