### ****Gong Farmers to Firefighters: how history sparks careers thinking in KS1****

This Year 2 History lesson from Alex Druce, Curriculum Lead at Marine Academy Primary, part of the Ted Wragg Trust, is about much more than life in 1666. It’s an ideal entry point to careers education, helping children recognise how jobs shape daily life, how work has changed over time, and how people contribute to society in different ways.

By comparing roles like chimney sweeps, apothecaries and blacksmiths with today’s firefighters, doctors and delivery drivers, children begin to explore the big idea that the world of work is not fixed - it evolves. They start to think critically about which jobs still exist, why some have disappeared, and what skills are needed now.

More importantly, this lesson invites children to imagine themselves in different roles. Acting out 17th-century jobs, discussing which they’d like or avoid, and comparing past and present all help to build self-awareness and aspiration – two core aims of careers education in primary.

It’s a brilliant way to develop empathy and social understanding too. Pupils see that many jobs in the past were dangerous, dirty or unfairly divided by class or gender – and they begin to understand the value of safety, rights, and access to opportunities today.

A simple history lesson like this lays powerful foundations. It opens a window into the world of work, connects curriculum learning to real life, and gives pupils the tools to imagine what they might do in the future, and why it matters.  
  
**I can compare aspects of life in 1666 with life in the present day.**

**Learning Objectives:**

* Describe some ways in which how we live now is similar and different to 1666.
* Talk about the similarities and differences between jobs in 1666 and now.
* Think about what job role you would have most/least like to have done in 1666 and why.
* Act out some of the job roles from 1666.

**Key Vocabulary:**  
London, 17th century, 1666, job, chimney sweep, blacksmith, apothecary, rat catcher, gong, farmer, spinster, chandler, scullery maid, carpenter, firefighter

**Lesson Activities**

* Complete knowledge retrieval practice – sheet in children’s books and example to model on the slides.
* **Recap:** What do you remember from our History learning in Term 1 about what life was like in Victorian times? Think about homes, schools, jobs and children’s lives.
* **Discussion:** What do you think life would have been like back in 1666? Use timeline to show how far back this was. Show images.
* **Watch video:** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPY-hr-8-M0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPY-hr-8-M0)  
  Discuss while watching or afterwards:
  + What would it be like to live in London in 1666?
  + What would life be like if you were rich or poor?
  + How did people communicate?
  + What would happen if people became ill?
  + How did people get food and water?
* **Modern contrast:** Show an image of someone putting food shopping into a car.
  + What are they doing? Could people do this in 1666?
  + What is the same? What is different?

### ****Careers Focus Activity****

* Discuss jobs people do today – gather ideas from children.
* Introduce jobs from 1666: Each group or pair reads a job card (e.g. blacksmith, gong farmer, etc.).
  + Swap cards and share back with class.
  + Discuss: Which job from 1666 would you most/least like to do and why?
  + Are there jobs today that are a bit like those from 1666?
  + What jobs no longer exist? Why?
* **Roleplay:**
  + Act out jobs from 1666 in pairs or small groups.
  + Hot seating: children take on a character/job from 1666; others ask questions to find out more.
  + Adults to take photos and write speech bubble post-its for books.

### ****Plenary****

* Reflect on how different jobs were in 1666. Focus on firefighters as a modern contrast.
  + What equipment do firefighters use today?
  + What did people use in 1666 to fight fires? (leather buckets, fire squirts, fire hooks, axes)
  + Why was the Great Fire so hard to stop? (wooden buildings, close together)
* Discuss how lucky we are to have a fire service now – and the vital role of emergency services.