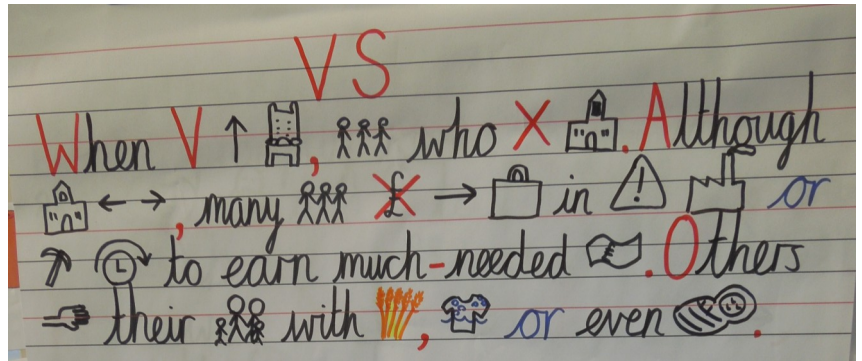
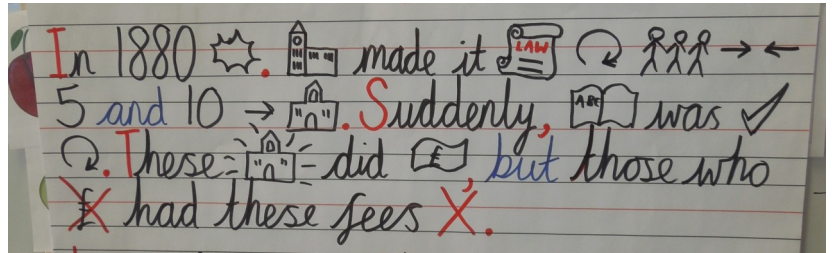


Victorian Schools

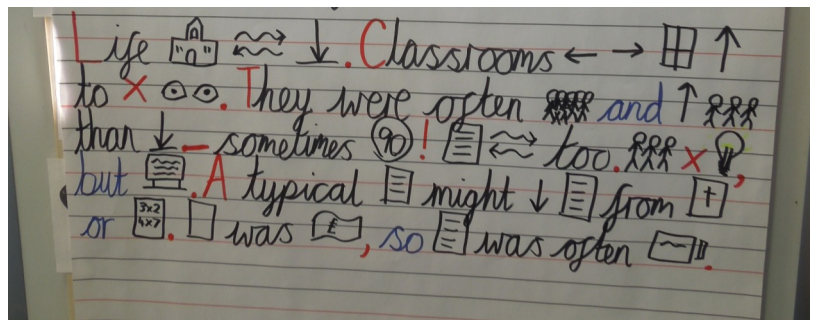
When Victoria ascended to the throne, there were many children who didn't attend school. Although there were schools widely available, many children from poorer families went to work in dangerous factories or mines during the day to earn much-needed money. Others had to help their families with farming duties, wash day or even looking after younger siblings.



In 1880 everything changed. The government made it compulsory for all children between the ages of five and ten to attend school. Suddenly, education was available for everyone. These new schools did charge fees, but those who were too poor to pay had these fees waived.



Life at school was very different from today. Classrooms were large with windows positioned high on the walls to prevent children from seeing out. They were often very crowded and had a lot more children than they do today – sometimes as many as ninety! The work differed too. Children weren't expected to understand things, but learned by copying from the board. A typical lesson might include copying passages from the Bible or copying out times tables. Paper was expensive, so work was often completed on slate using chalks.



Compared to today, the school day was long – often running as late as 5 o'clock. School started promptly at 9am with an assembly in the hall. Children would sing hymns, say prayers and listen to a reading from the Bible. Lunch time was often as long as two hours because many children would walk home to eat their lunch there. There were no school dinners. If home was too far, children might bring bread and cheese to eat at school.

