



ENHANCING CURRICULUM LEARNING THROUGH FARM VISITS

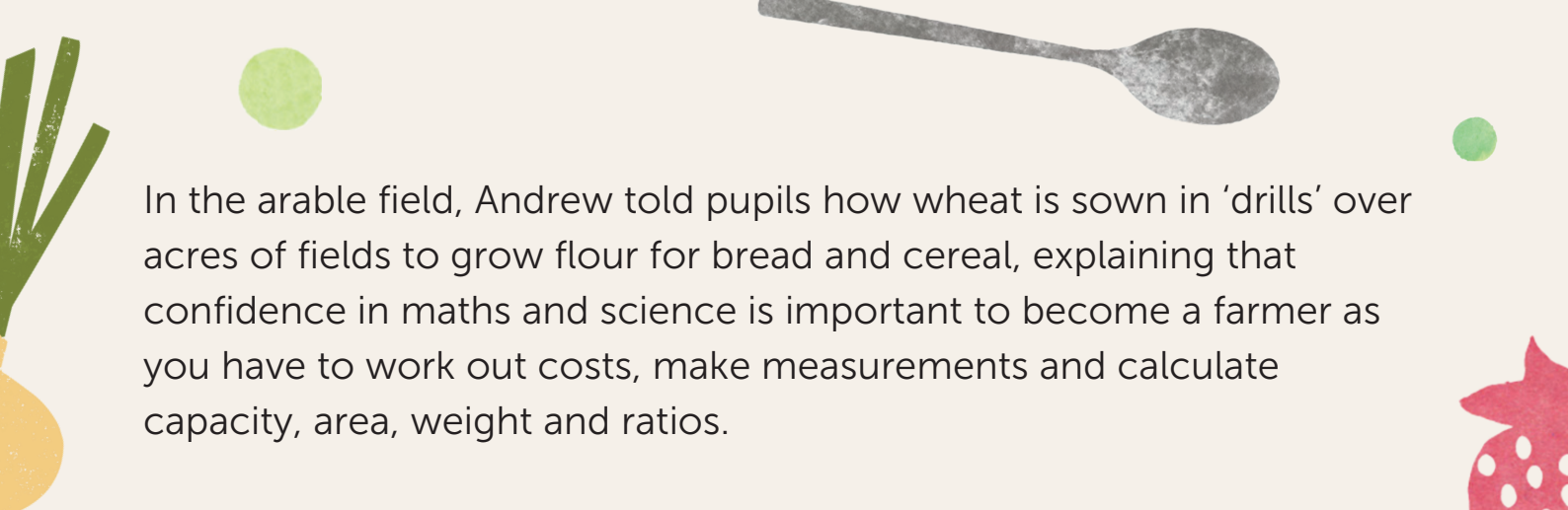
Billesdon Primary School in Leicester recently visited a local farm to learn about farming and the food system, linking it back to the national curriculum at each stage.

Despite squeezed budgets and taking time out of the classroom, the school knew how valuable a visit to the farm would be for their pupils after attending a Food for Life Inspired training session. During this session, school staff were shown how farm visits can connect with the curriculum and were given resources from the Food for Life Learning and Skills Hub to support this.

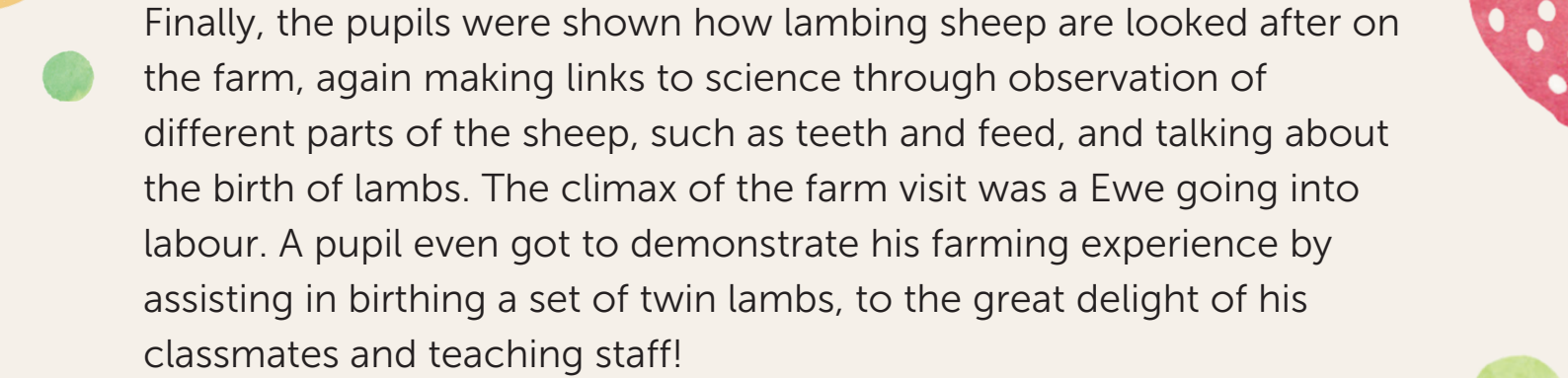
The school really value their long-standing link with a local farming family, and every spring all pupils are welcomed by farmers Abigail and Andrew.

During the visit, pupils saw how milking works and learnt about the gestation and birth of calves, which linked to their current science topic of life cycles. Later, their mental maths skills were put to the test as pupils enthusiastically worked out the answers to questions like 'on average, how many litres of milk are produced each day by the cows on the farm?'. Nutrition is also discussed when considering the price and value of whole and semi-skimmed milk.

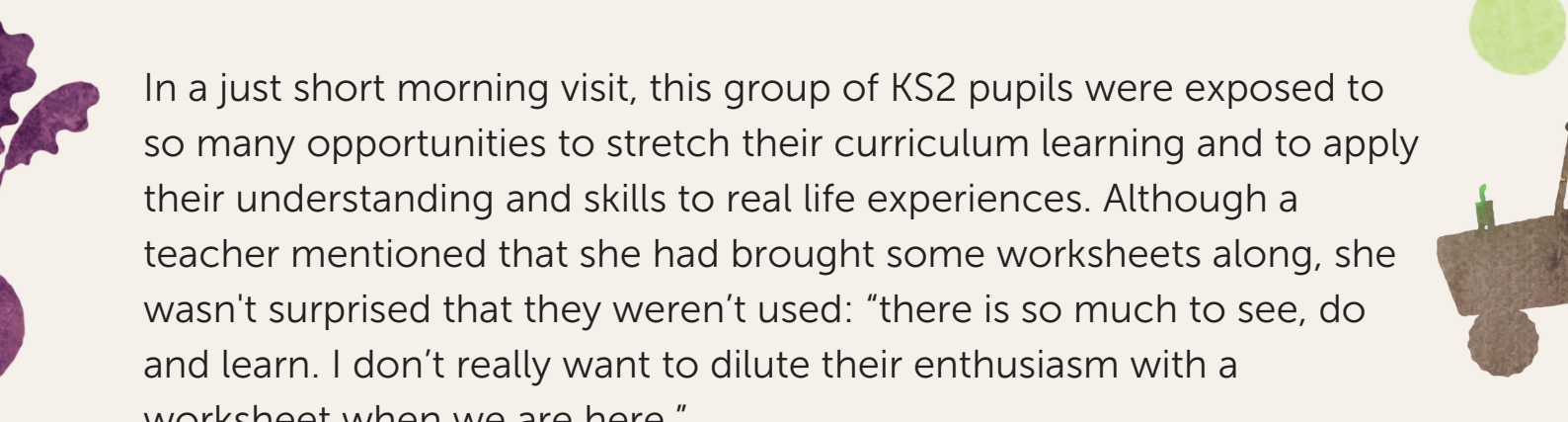
On the way to an arable field, pupils observed a parked tractor and plough up close, which encouraged discussions around historic farming methods compared to now, which linked to their current history topic of the stone age. Andrew and Abigail also shared photos of family ancestors farming on their land from previous generations, an interesting and unique story from the local area.



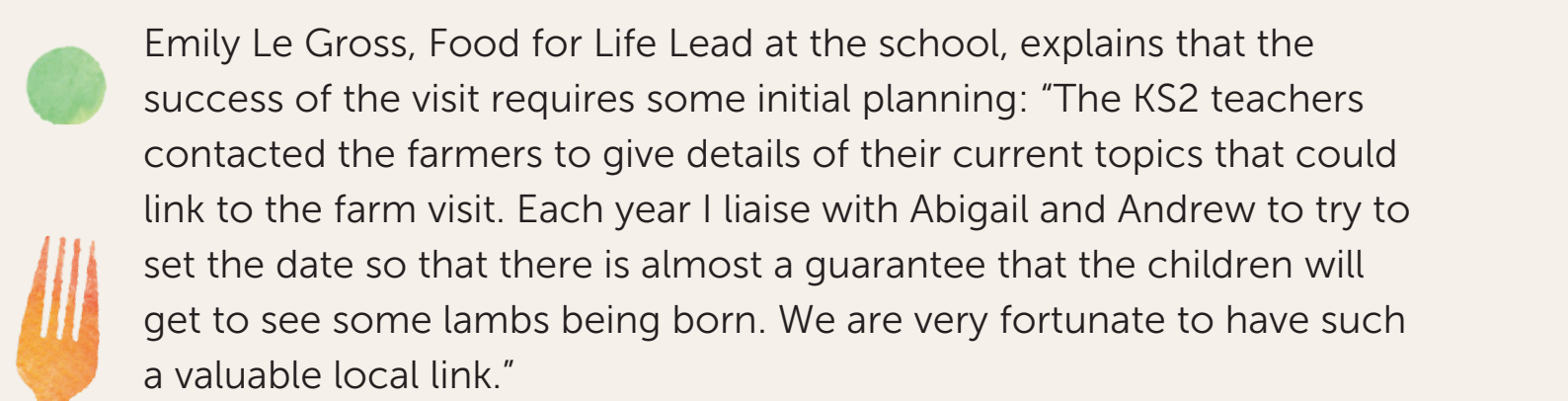
In the arable field, Andrew told pupils how wheat is sown in 'drills' over acres of fields to grow flour for bread and cereal, explaining that confidence in maths and science is important to become a farmer as you have to work out costs, make measurements and calculate capacity, area, weight and ratios.



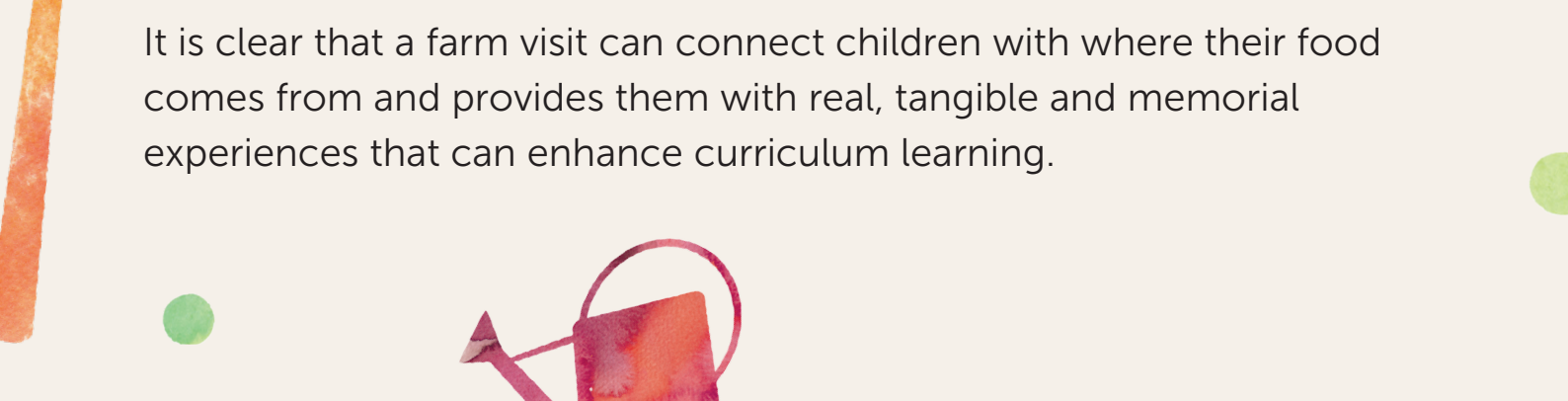
Finally, the pupils were shown how lambing sheep are looked after on the farm, again making links to science through observation of different parts of the sheep, such as teeth and feed, and talking about the birth of lambs. The climax of the farm visit was a Ewe going into labour. A pupil even got to demonstrate his farming experience by assisting in birthing a set of twin lambs, to the great delight of his classmates and teaching staff!



In a just short morning visit, this group of KS2 pupils were exposed to so many opportunities to stretch their curriculum learning and to apply their understanding and skills to real life experiences. Although a teacher mentioned that she had brought some worksheets along, she wasn't surprised that they weren't used: "there is so much to see, do and learn. I don't really want to dilute their enthusiasm with a worksheet when we are here."



Emily Le Gross, Food for Life Lead at the school, explains that the success of the visit requires some initial planning: "The KS2 teachers contacted the farmers to give details of their current topics that could link to the farm visit. Each year I liaise with Abigail and Andrew to try to set the date so that there is almost a guarantee that the children will get to see some lambs being born. We are very fortunate to have such a valuable local link."



It is clear that a farm visit can connect children with where their food comes from and provides them with real, tangible and memorial experiences that can enhance curriculum learning.