

Alex and Rosie

Learn About Woods and Trees



A Story with Widgit Symbols

David Blakesley and Tharada Blakesley

Alex and Rosie Learn About Woods and Trees

Stories by David Blakesley

Illustrations by Tharada Blakesley



Introduction

Autism and Nature is a non-profit organisation dedicated to enriching the lives of autistic children, by helping to engage them with the countryside and rural heritage. 'Alex and Rosie Learn about Woods and Trees' tells the story of two children, Alex and Rosie, who learn about trees in school, visit an ancient woodland in Suffolk, and finally plant trees in their school grounds. The story should allow parents, carers and teachers to discuss topics such as the importance of protecting ancient woodland; the resources that trees and shrubs provide for wildlife (for example fruit, foraging opportunities and shelter); and planting trees. We hope that it will appeal to younger autistic children and children with speech and language difficulties, and encourage their interest in the countryside. This book represents the first in a short series of story books that explore environmental issues affecting the countryside.

This eBook was generously funded by the Nineveh Charitable Trust and Activities Unlimited. An audiovisual version is also available on the Autism and Nature YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/@autismandnature7435). We would like to offer special thanks to Dame Virginia Mckenna for kindly reading the audiovisual version. Sound recordings for the audiovisual edition were sourced from the British Library (© copyright British Library Board and Wildlife Sound Trust) with special thanks to Cheryl Tipp. We are also grateful to Chris Southwell for his continued support for our work and help with publicity. We would also like to thank Tone Blakesley, Hugh Clark (www.bats.org.uk), Jeff Higgott, Ron McCombe and Terry Whittaker, who kindly allowed us to base artwork on their wildlife photographs. We would like to thank Guillaume Duclaud-Williams (Widgit Software Ltd) for his valuable advice on symbolising the text. Finally, we would like to thank Tone Blakesley for the design, editing and production of both the eBook and audiovisual editions. The eBook can be downloaded from the Autism and Nature website (www.autismandnature.org.uk).



Alex

and



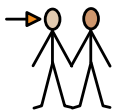
Rosie



love



trees.

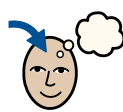


They

are

excited

to



learn

about



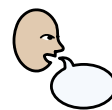
woods



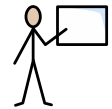
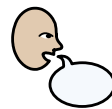
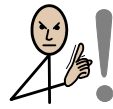
in school.



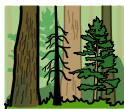
"Why are woods and trees so important," asked the teacher.



"Trees are a home for wildlife," said Alex.



"Ancient woodland is the most important," said the teacher.



400



"Ancient woodland has been growing for over 400 years!"



Spotted flycatcher



White admiral

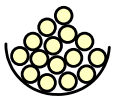


Speckled yellow moth

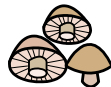
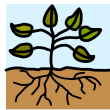
Badger



Primroses



"Many birds and animals live in ancient woodland."



"Insects, plants and fungi also live in ancient woodland."



"Some



plants

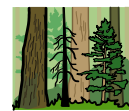


love



the shade

of



ancient woodland."



"Bluebells are spectacular in spring!"



Ancient woodland

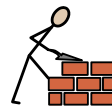


THREATS TO ANCIENT WOODLAND

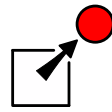
- Climate Change
- Development
- Pollution
- Tree diseases
and pests



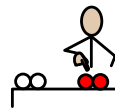
"It is very important to protect ancient woodland."



"Ancient woodland is threatened by development and climate change."



"Some very old trees are found outside of woods."



"It is important to protect these trees too."



"Some forests have been planted with conifers."



"Conifer forests look very different to ancient woodland."



Foxglove



Siskin



Redpoll



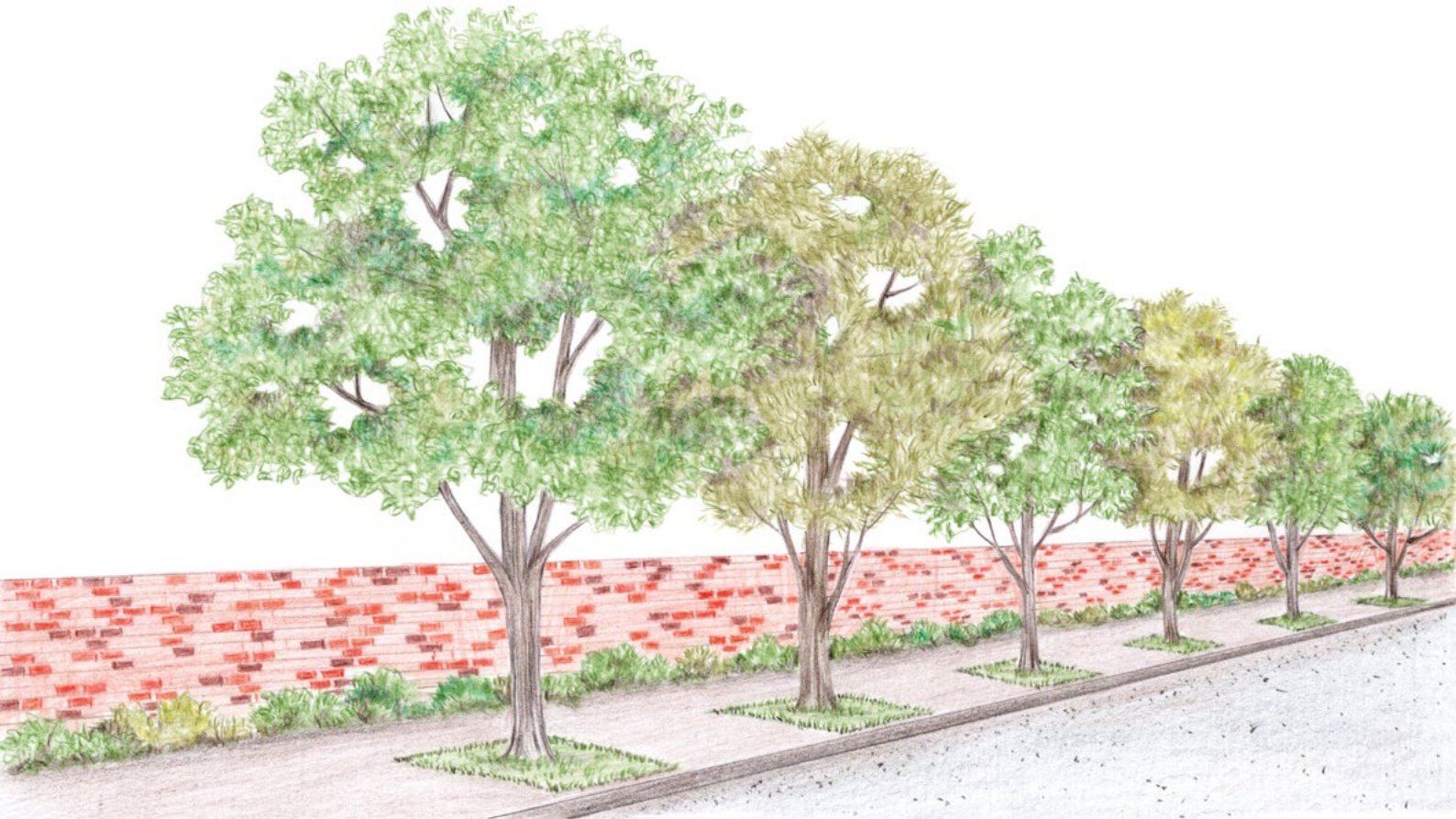
Common lizard



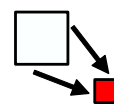
"Conifer forests provide timber."



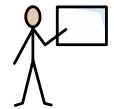
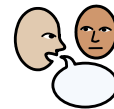
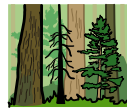
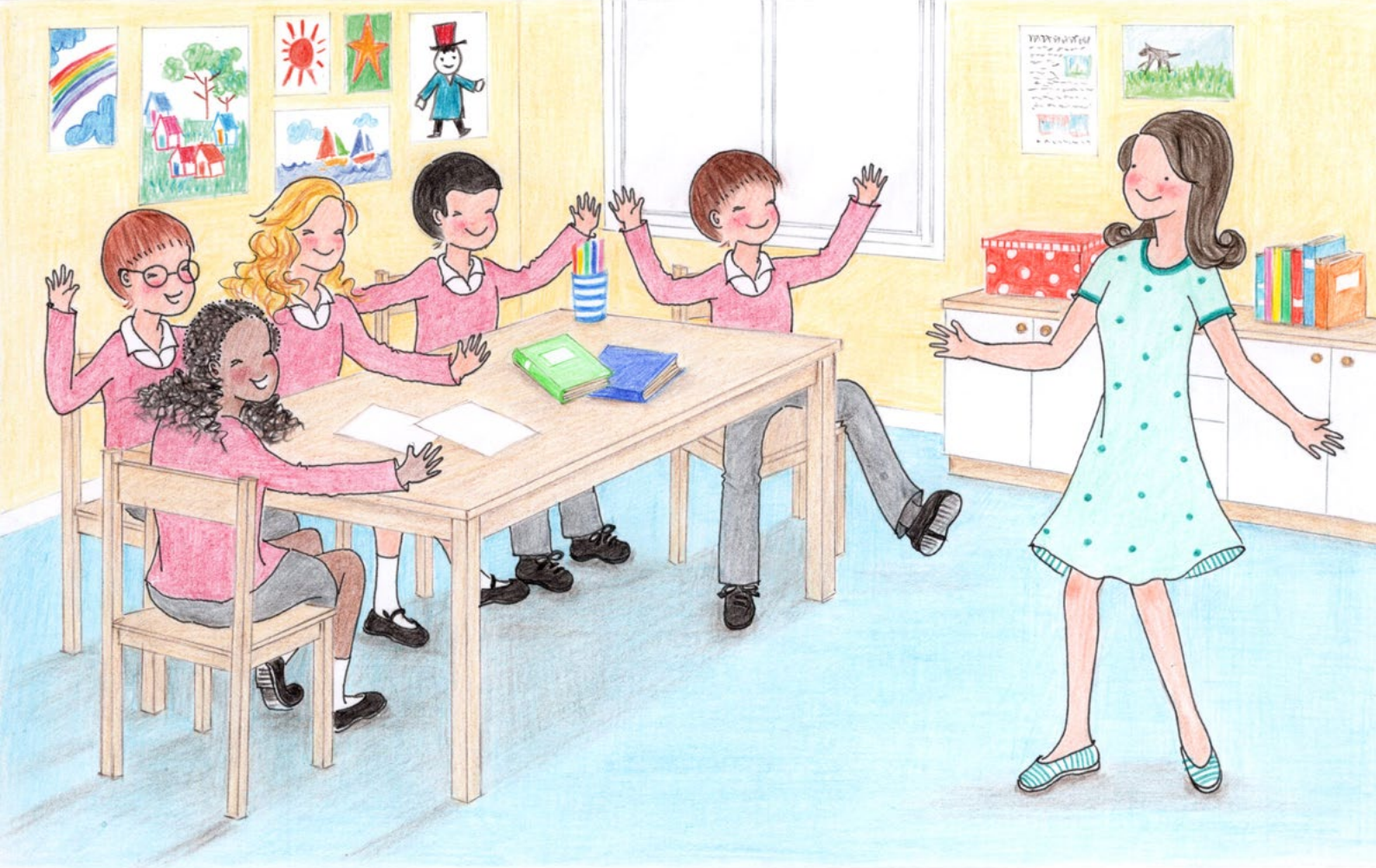
"But the forests are also home for some wildlife."



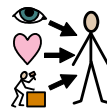
"Trees are also planted in towns and villages."



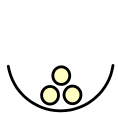
"The trees provide shade, a home to wildlife and reduce pollution."



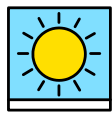
"We are going to visit an ancient woodland," said the teacher.



"It will be an amazing experience."



A few



days



later,



the children



visited

Bradfield



Woods.



The children



were very

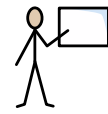
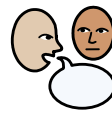


excited.

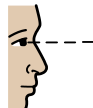
Great spotted woodpecker



Nuthatch



"Tree bark is important for birds," said the teacher.



"Woodpeckers and nuthatch search the bark for insect prey."

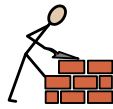
Treecreeper



Brown long-eared bat



"Treecreepers



build



their



nest



behind



loose



bark."

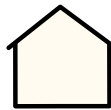


"Bark

also



provides



shelter

for



roosting



bats."



Willow warbler



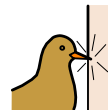
Coal tit



Great tit



"Large numbers of insects live in tree foliage."



"Birds such as tits and warblers feed on the insects."



Hazel



Silver birch

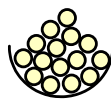
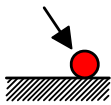


Pedunculate oak

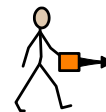
Field maple



Bramble



There were many different shapes of leaves.



The children collected some leaves to take back to school.

Hawthorn berries



Dormouse

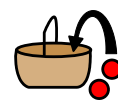
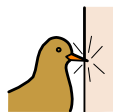


Blackbird

Hazelnuts



"Fruit and nuts are also important for wildlife."



"Thrushes eat berries whilst dormice collect nuts."

Jay



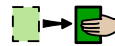
Field maple



Pedunculate oak acorns



"Jays help to plant the acorns of oak trees."



"Field maple seeds are moved by the wind!"



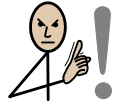
Turkeytail



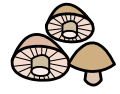
Sulphur tuft



Dor beetle



"Deadwood is also an important habitat."



"Deadwood should be protected, for fungi and insects."

Early purple orchid



Speckled wood



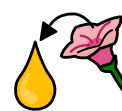
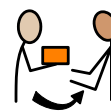
Red campion



Black-headed cardinal beetle



"Open spaces in woods are also beneficial for wildlife."



"Plants like sunlight... their flowers provide nectar for insects."



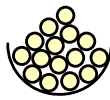
Blue tit



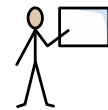
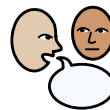
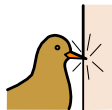
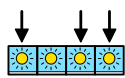
Goldcrest



Long-tailed tit



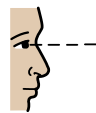
Suddenly, the children heard a lot of birds calling in the trees.



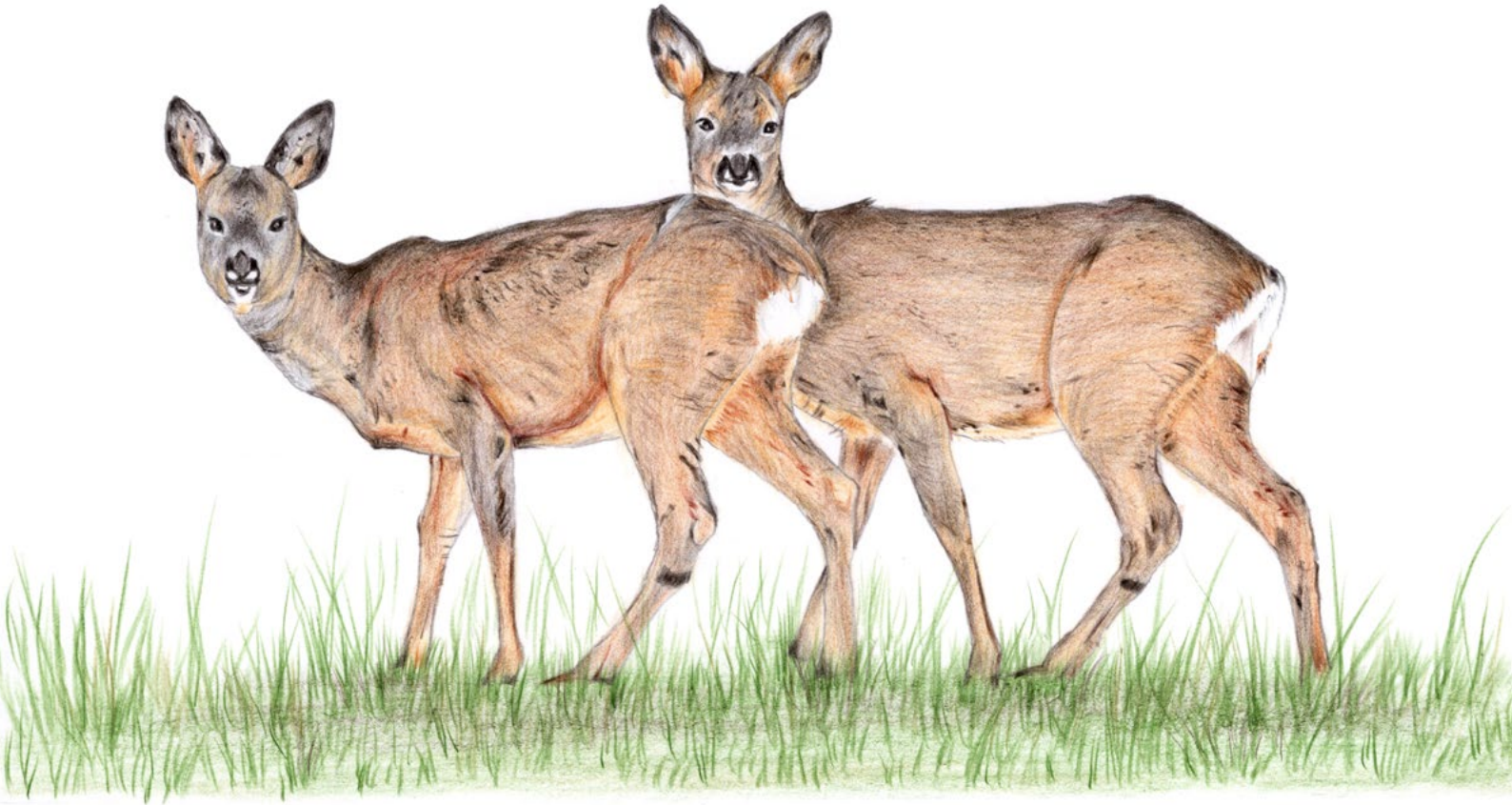
"Birds often feed together," said the teacher.



The children also heard a rustling sound in the leaf litter.



A grey squirrel was searching for acorns.



"Let's



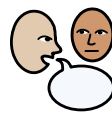
stand



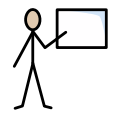
quietly



and listen,"



said



the teacher.



The children



were

rewarded

with the



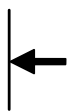
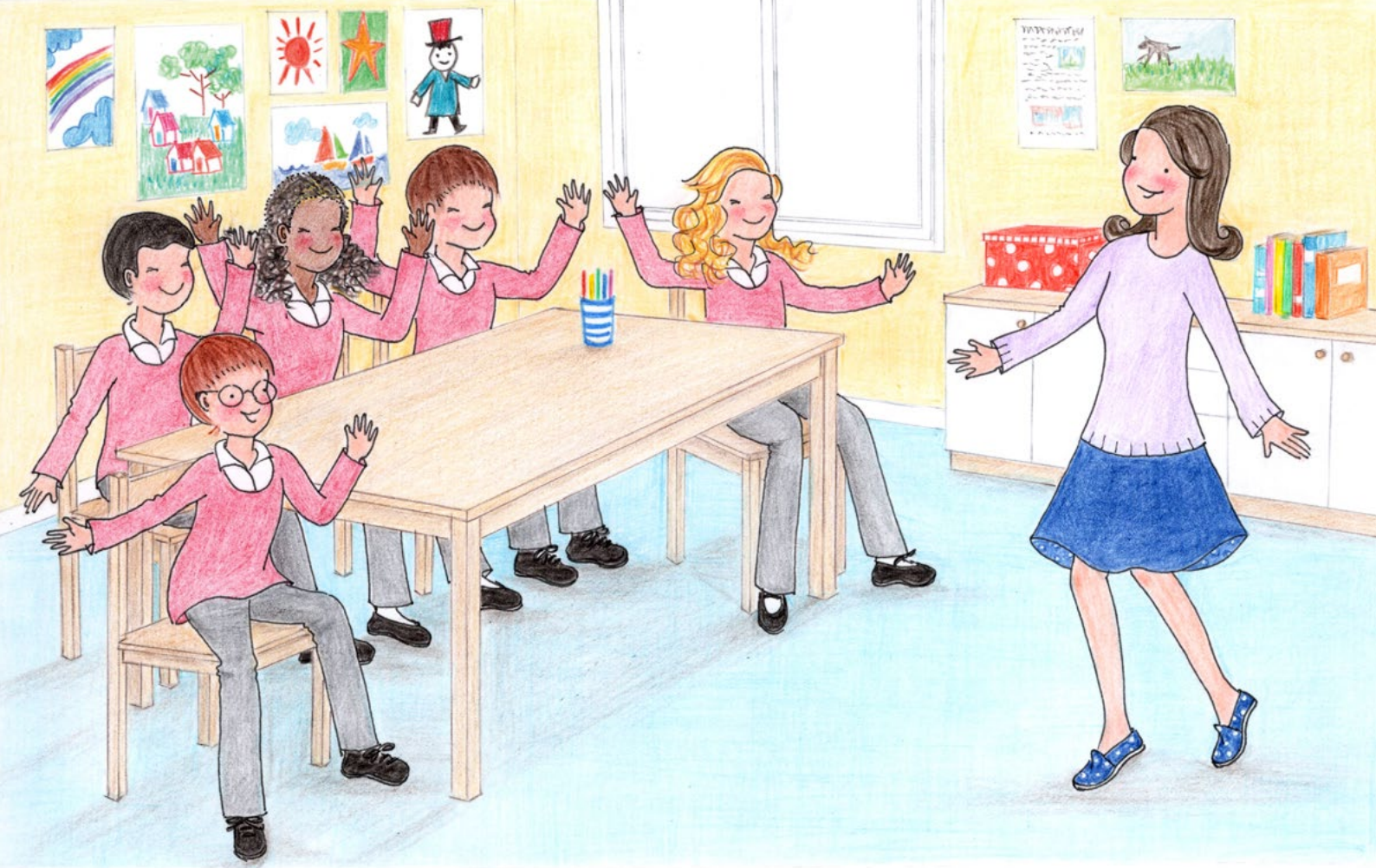
sight

of two

2



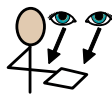
roe deer.



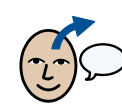
Back in the classroom, the teacher had some exciting news.



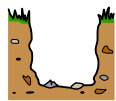
"We are going to plant trees in the school grounds!"



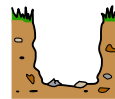
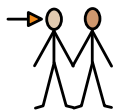
The teacher showed a tree sapling to the children.



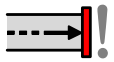
"We are going to plant oak, rowan and hazel," she explained.



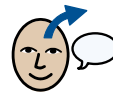
The children dug holes with a spade.



They then carefully placed the saplings in the holes.



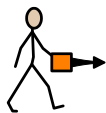
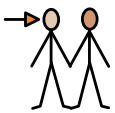
Finally, the children wrapped the saplings with plastic tubes.



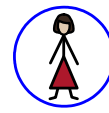
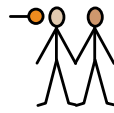
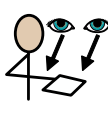
"The tubes will protect the saplings," explained the teacher.



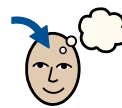
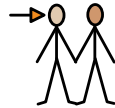
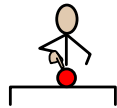
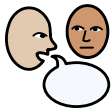
Later, the children made artwork about woods and trees.



They were allowed to take some of their art home.



Alex and Rosie showed their art to Mum and Dad.



And told them what they had learned about trees in school.

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Alex and Rosie learn about woods and trees at school, visit an ancient wood and plant trees in their school grounds.

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