Multiplication of pairs of simple fractions

Cut one circle into quarters and another into eighths.

Explain that of and x have the same meaning so $\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{1}{4}$ = $\frac{1}{2}$ of $\frac{1}{4}$ = $\frac{1}{8}$

Show the children that to find half of a quarter you need to cut the quarter in half. Compare this 'half of a quarter' with the eighths, and agree that they match.

$\frac{1}{2}$ of $\frac{1}{4}$ = $\frac{1}{8}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{1}{4}$ = $\frac{1}{8}$

Repeat by cutting a half into three parts, which gives one sixth: $\frac{1}{3}$ x $\frac{1}{2}$ = $\frac{1}{6}$

Work through lots of examples with the children until they confidently multiply the digits, understanding why they do so.

This work can be extended to multiples of fractions e.g. $\frac{1}{2}$ x $\frac{3}{4}$