



Aston Rowant C+E Primary School
School Lane, Aston Rowant, Oxon OX49 5SU
01844 351671 office@aston-rowant.oxon.sch.uk
 Headteacher: Mrs Helen France



10th January 2025

Message from the Head Teacher

Happy New Year! Welcome back to this new term. I hope that you had a great break with a very Happy Christmas and have had a peaceful start to the new year.

End of Day Collection

In the spirit of starting the new year off as we mean to go on, rather than nagging, I want to highlight a couple of good practices to remember. Firstly, we cannot release children to parents who are stood in Plowden Park rather than on the Moors Path, so please ensure that you are stood on the school side of the cut through so that we can clearly see you. Secondly, please remember that School House is private property and try to avoid standing on the drive. Thirdly, we have a number of cars that are stood idling as parents wait for their children and the smell of fumes reaching the playground is quite pronounced. We would be grateful both for the health of the school community and for the environment if engines are turned off at this time. Finally, do park considerately for our neighbours in Aston Rowant and Kingston Blount. Thank you

Key Areas of Information about Aston Rowant School: How we use INSET days

INSET (In-service Education and Training) days are a series of days, normally 5 per academic year, during which children do not attend school so that staff receive CPD (continuous professional development) or are given time to complete administrative tasks. INSET days are an excellent way to bring schools and staff together to explore issues in greater depth, to learn from one another and to set priorities for the future.

On Monday the teachers and TAs joined with the other schools across Thame Partnership for a day of training and reflection on the theme of wellbeing. We enjoyed an amazing keynote speech followed by a variety of workshops.

Values Based Education: Our key-note speaker was Dr Neil Hawkes, a former headteacher who now visits and advises schools worldwide to share some of the key ingredients for nurturing a school based on wellbeing. He is part of a task group of experts advising G20 leaders on the importance of values to humanity, and has spoken at the UN in Geneva as a United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) expert on ethical leadership.

Neil has been instrumental in developing a values-based approach in schools. This is a balanced, holistic approach to education that works with the national and individual school-focused curriculum to create an environment that is shaped by an explicit teaching and modelling of pro-social and pro-environmental human values. The aims for children include developing a positive sense of self-worth, improved ethical and relational capacities and a greater connection with the natural world. Watch this space for how we plan to embed this into Aston Rowant School.

Bereavement Support Training by Child Bereavement UK. This workshop provided an overview of bereavement specifically for people working in a school. It encouraged all of us to feel more confident in talking about loss, death and grief. We looked at children's understanding of death; the models of grief; managing grief in school; bereavement policies and procedures; as well as strategies for support and staff wellbeing.

Therapeutic Play: Practical Play Therapy Training This session was run by our very own Mrs Dawn Hayes. We were delighted to introduce therapeutic play to Aston Rowant School last year. Mrs Hayes works with both individuals and small groups each Wednesday helping children to have the words to understand and describe how they are feeling or why they are behaving as they do. Through play the children are helped to recognise emotions and behaviour that they find difficult to explain it to someone if asked. This workshop included a summary of the theory of Play Therapy, alongside practical activities for us to take part in and use in our classroom practice.

Wellbeing: It's not about the cake – How to be (and feel) well We love a cake in the staffroom at Aston Rowant School! However, whilst it definitely makes us feel good it is not our main strategy for staff wellbeing. Our friends from Point 5 ran this engaging, challenging and active session. It started by debunking the myths about wellbeing at work. It then explored what helps and what hinders our wellbeing and why. We then all planned daily doable actions which support wellness at work before setting ourselves targets for the year ahead. We hope by being at our very best as individuals and a team we will be able to offer the best to the Aston Rowant School community. Though we remain happy to support this with cake!

Kind regards

Mrs France

GRATITUDE RESILIENCE OUTREACH WONDER TRUST HARMONY

Growing together, rooted in God, enjoying fullness of life. (Colossians 2:7)



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Teaching and Learning in the Classrooms this week:



Hedgehog Class

It has been wonderful to welcome our Hedgehogs after the Christmas holiday and hear about all the wonderful things they have been doing. This week we got stuck straight in with our phonics, learning the sounds 'j' and 'v'. We have learnt to read and write words containing these sounds and even had a go at writing simple sentences with a 'j' or 'v' word in them. In maths we have been exploring mass and capacity. The children have had lots of fun using the balance scales to explore which objects are heavier or lighter, and seeing if they can make the scales balance. Our topic this term is 'Pick a Picture'. Each week will be looking at a different work of art from a wide range of artist. We will talk about what we see in the artwork and discuss our thoughts and feelings about it. Our picture this week has been Wassily Kandinsky's *Concentric Circles*. It inspired us to create our own circle artwork and has really helped to develop our fine motor skills.



Squirrel Class

Welcome back to Spring term and Happy New Year to you all! It's been wonderful to see all the children again after the break and we have started the week off with our new (very apt!) text titled 'One Snowy Night' by Nick Butterworth. The main character of the story is the lovable park keeper Percy, and we have based all our writing on the animals that Percy looks after. We will read some more Percy stories over the coming weeks as the class have really enjoyed the themes of the text. We continued learning about shapes in maths with Year 1 completing patterns with shapes and making shapes on geoboards. Year 2 drew some 2D shapes and identified some horizontal and vertical lines of symmetry. In Music we listened to some blues music by BB King and talked about the origins of the genre. The class then played glockenspiel alongside a musical number titled 'Into the Groove'. Mrs Surman and I were very impressed with their rhythm! Finally, we began our history learning of the Great Fire of London and the children are very enthused by this topic! Excitingly, we also have a history workshop booked in for Wednesday next week, kindly funded by the PTA. Much to be proud of and to look forward to!



Fox Class

A very happy New Year to you all! We certainly hit the ground running in Fox Class! We kicked off our topic about Ancient Egypt by carrying out some research about what life was like and produced a non-chronological report in our English. In Maths, children have continued their journey with multiplication and division with the orange group focussed on multiples of 10 and related facts whilst the green group focussed on factors and products. In our Science, we learnt about contact forces using a ping pong ball to see how many ways we can move it then documenting the direction and force used. In our Art this half term we will look at honing our sewing skills. We started learning how to make a knot then thread a needle. Once this had been learnt, the class learnt running stitch focussing on small, neat stitches. We then also managed to try cross stitch too! If you have needles at home, it would be lovely if they could practise their new skills at home especially the threading and knotting the thread in preparation for our making later this half term! I am so impressed in their attitude to a new term and their work – let's keep it up!



Owl Class

Happy New Year to all of you! It's wonderful to have the class back, well rested and ready for our Spring Term to begin. The children have dived straight into their topics this term with enthusiasm; in English, the children applied their letter writing skills to craft informal friendship letters to their own home. They were tasked with selecting several memories of their own home, thinking carefully about how they felt at that time, and then corresponding to their own home as if it were a living person. The children wrote some beautiful messages and had great fun sharing some of their favourite memories with one another. In Maths, we began with a swift recap of formal multiplication before beginning to understand how we can apply our understanding of factors to help us divide, before we looked at the short division method in more depth. In Science, we began Earth and Space, and had wonderful question-led discussions as the children thought about as many questions as they could: what happens if you touch a star? Why don't planets collide in their orbits? How long are days on Mars? We also separated the three main models of the Solar System: Ptolemy's Geocentric model, and Al-Hazen's and Copernicus' now (mostly) universally accepted Heliocentric model. We also used Aristotle's horizon method to quickly prove to ourselves that Earth is indeed round. In RE, we played a quickfire game of 'Whispers' to see how rapidly the meaning of a message can be lost, and that we should always try to find the primary source to find the truth of the message. We did this as part of our lesson about prophecy and God's ways of directly talking to man by dreams, visions, visitations and prophets.

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Photo Diary of the Week



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Whole School Topic - Autumn Term: Open the Book

Values: Trust

At the start of a new year we often make new year's resolutions or think about 'turning over a new leaf'. It is the idea that we may want to proactively live differently or make changes in our lives. This week in Collective Worship we looked at the story of Zacchaeus. When he met with Jesus he realised that he was called to change. He began to trust in Jesus and completely changed his life to reflect God's mercy and to live in a way that honoured him. We also thought about how we could live and what changes we wanted to make in our own lives.

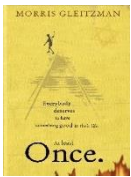
Jesus said, "Today salvation has come to this house... For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Luke 19: 9-10

Climate Warriors' Challenge

How will the 2025 story unfold? 2024 saw 29% more solar installed than in 2023; and renewables are expected to surpass coal for electricity generation in 2025. Will the booming clean energy transition stand strong despite US leadership plans to thwart climate ambitions? Amazon deforestation rates are at a nine-year low, yet forest loss is still a major challenge. Will COP30 help focus attention towards the interdependency of our nature and climate crises?

How will **YOUR** 2025 story unfold? Our children are challenged to create a 2025 origami 'fortune-teller/chatterbox' – on the theme of protecting our natural world; and then to launch the 'great unfolding' by playing the game with members of their family and also undertaking the 'action' to help protect our natural world.

Book Review *Once* by Morris Gleitzman, review by Mrs Olsen



I had heard wonderful things about this book and I wasn't disappointed. This book tells the story of a young Polish boy called Felix in 1942. Felix is Jewish and has spent several years in an orphanage, but decides to run away to find his parents. He soon learns that the home he knew is no longer a safe place to be. Whilst set against the sad brutality of WW2, I loved how the author uses childhood innocence and imagination. Due to the emotional content of this book, it is clearly aimed at Year 5 and above.

Happiness Calendar: Happier January

How can we start this new year happier? This month, we're encouraging everyone to focus on small steps to try to boost happiness - for ourselves and others around us - to spread kindness and hopefully inspire others to do the same. You can find this month's happiness calendar [here](#).

Attendance - This week

| School target 97% | 97% - 100% | 90% -97% | Below 90% |
|-------------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Hedgehog Class | 77% | 0% | 23% |
| Squirrel Class | 94% | 0% | 6% |
| Fox Class | 96% | 0% | 4% |
| Owl Class | 90% | 0% | 10% |

Housepoints

| House | This Week | Total |
|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Bethlehem | 42 | 42 |
| Eden | 46 | 46 |
| Galilee | 46 | 46 |
| Jerusalem | 42 | 42 |



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Emails and letters sent this Week

| Date | Email/Letter | For | From | Concerning |
|----------|--------------|-----|--------|---------------------------------------|
| 10.01.25 | Email | All | Office | Immunisations Team – Flu vaccinations |

| January | |
|---|---|
| Wed 15 th | Squirrel – Great Fire of London workshop (PTA funded) |
| Wed 15 th | PTA meeting 7:45pm The Inn Emmington |
| Wed 22 nd | Pyjamas Day for Wycombe Homeless Connection for a donation to this worthwhile charity |
| Wed 29 th | Fox and Owl – Mr Egypt workshop (PTA funded) |
| February | |
| 3 rd – 9 th | Children’s Mental Health Week – ‘Know Yourself, Grow Yourself’ |
| Tues 4 th | Internet Safety Day – ‘Too good to be true?’ |
| Weds 5 th | Netball Club trial at lunchtime with Mrs Campbell |
| Mon 10 th | FGB |
| Mon 17 th – Fri 21 st | Half Term |
| Mon 24 th | Nurse visit for EYFS & Year 6 – Height & weight measurements plus vision screening for EYFS |
| Friday 28 th | Dance Club starts in Hall |
| March | |
| Wed 5 th | World Book Day – Heroes and Villains |
| Fri 7 th | International Women’s Day – sports for girls run by JR Sport |
| 10 th – 14 th | National Science Week – ‘Change and Adapt’ |
| Tues 18 th | Interhouse Cross Country |
| Fri 21 st | Red Nose Day – wear your jumper or cardigans back to front for a donation to Comic Relief |
| Fri 28 th | Parents’ Book Look – 2:30pm to look through your child’s work. No Celebration Assembly. |
| April | |
| 31 st – 4 th | RE Enrichment Week – <i>What is Spirituality?</i> |
| Tue 1 st / Wed 2 nd | Parents’ Evenings |
| Fri 4 th | 9:15am Spring Service in Church |

Academic Year Calendar

| Spring 25 | |
|---|-----------------|
| Tue 7 th Jan – Fri 14 th Feb | Spring Term (1) |
| Mon 17 th – Fri 21 st Feb | HALF TERM |
| Mon 24 th Feb – Fri 4 th Apr | Spring Term (2) |
| Summer 25 | |
| Tue 22 nd April – Thu 22 nd May | Summer Term (1) |
| Mon 26 th May – Fri 30 th May | HALF TERM |
| Mon 2 nd June – Tue 22 nd July | Summer Term (2) |
| Autumn 25 | |
| Mon 1 st Sept – Thurs 23 rd Oct | Autumn Term (1) |
| Mon 27 th – Fri 31 st Oct | HALF TERM |
| Mon 3 rd Nov – Fri 19 th Dec | Autumn Term (2) |

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