

Geography Pupil Voice at Aston Rowant C E Primary School

At Aston Rowant, Geography is alive, active and rooted in the natural world around us. Our pupils regularly speak with enthusiasm about their experiences - whether they are paddling in the local waterways, navigating our extensive school grounds, or connecting with children from across the world.

Here is what our children say about Geography at Aston Rowant.

Understanding Our Place in the World

Children love exploring locations, maps, journeys and places, discovering how geography helps them understand where they are and how they connect to the wider world.

“Now I understand where I live in the world!”

“Maps help you tell a story - I didn't realise that before.”

“Building our 3D map was the best. We made the river twist around the forest!”

“Me on the Map” – Learning Through World Book Day

During World Book Day 2026, children took part in a Geography and Story Mapping workshop, exploring maps through storytelling and creativity:

- “Now I understand where I live in the world!”
- “Maps help you tell a story – I didn't realise that before.”
- “Building our map was the best – our river twisted around the forest.”
- “I want to make another 3D map at home now!”

These activities helped pupils understand *location, scale, direction, and spatial representation* while developing the joy of Geography through imaginative play.

Exploring Our Local Area – Five Ways Trip

Our visits to Five Ways are a highlight of Geography learning. Pupils explore:

- Paddling in shallow streams to experience river flow and erosion
- Identifying flora and fauna in the chalk grassland and woodland edges
- Observing physical geography such as slopes, meanders, soil types and microhabitats
- Discussing human impact on the local environment

Pupil Voice:

- “My favourite bit is walking to Five Ways and paddling in the water.”
- “We saw yellow plants I've never seen before – our teacher told us they grow here every spring!”
- “We learnt why the water is so clear and how it moves the stones.”

These trips strengthen fieldwork skills such as *observing, sketching, measuring, and recording*.

Orienteering Around Our School and Village

With a large open field, woodland edges, and safe village pathways, pupils love developing navigation skills:

- Using compass directions
- Reading simple and later OS-style maps
- Following orienteering courses around the grounds
- Navigating through the village using key landmarks

Pupil Voice:

- “I find maps hard but my friends help me and I'm a bit better at it.”

- “I liked finding the markers hidden in the woods!”
- “It felt like a real adventure.”

This builds resilience, problem-solving and collaboration.

Forest Friday Geography

In Forest Fridays, children frequently experience Geography through:

- Observing seasonal change
- Exploring habitats and ecosystems
- Learning how human and physical features interact
- Understanding land-use and the impact of conservation
- Using natural materials to model landscapes

Pupils say:

- “I love exploring other places all around the world... there are some pretty cool places on Earth!”
- “We found animal tracks and guessed where they travelled.”

Photography Trail – Finding Human & Physical Features

“I didn’t know our village had so many different features.”

“I liked taking photos of patterns in nature.”

“We found things people built and things nature made.”

The Photography Trail helps pupils identify and compare features using real landscapes.

Looking After Our Mini Orchard & Willow Circle

“My tree changed so much! The buds were green first and then pink.”

“We measured our tree and it grew a lot this year.”

“The willow circle makes its own little shadow place.”

Children love “adopting” a tree, observing:

- leaf growth
- seasonal change
- habitats
- weather impact
- microclimates

This builds long-term observational skills and environmental awareness.

Weather Watching & Seasonal Changes

“We check the weather every day. I like finding out if our guess was right!”

“The rain gauge filled up so fast last week.”

“I know the wind direction because of the arrow.”

EYFS and KSI pupils enjoy using our weather station, recording:

- rain
- temperature
- wind

- cloud cover
- seasonal changes

This early fieldwork builds vocabulary, curiosity and simple data skills.

Global Connections – Linking with Maqoma Primary School (South Africa)

Aston Rowant is proud to be part of the British Council Connecting Classrooms Project, linked with Maqoma Primary School, Fort Beaufort, South Africa.

Our Geography learning has been strengthened by participating in the Zero Hunger Project

Children learned about the geographical challenges in the Fort Beaufort region:

- Seasonal water scarcity
- Limited rainfall
- Periods of drought
- Soil erosion and poor soil fertility in rural areas
- Reliance on unpredictable agriculture

To understand how communities adapt, both schools designed floating gardens - small, buoyant agricultural platforms that:

- Keep soil moist
- Reduce reliance on dry ground
- Allow crops to grow where land is waterlogged or poor
- Help families grow food sustainably during environmental challenges

Pupil Voice:

- “We built floating gardens because they can farm even when the land cracks from too much sun.”
- “It was fun testing which materials floated the best.”
- “I didn’t know people had to work so hard just to grow food.”

Letter Writing Across Continents

Children also exchanged letters with pupils in Fort Beaufort:

- sharing information about their local environments,
- comparing weather, animals, and landscapes,
- learning about languages and culture,
- and discovering how Geography shapes daily life in different parts of the world.

Pupil Voice:

- “We learnt that they get much hotter weather than us.”
- “Their nearest river is huge – we looked it up on a map!”
- “I liked writing to them because now we know each other.”

This builds global citizenship, appreciation for diversity and real-world geographical understanding.

Why Pupils Love Geography at Aston Rowant

Across the school, children consistently share that they love Geography because:

- They enjoy *learning outdoors*
- They love understanding “how the world works”
- They like discovering places “beyond their imagination”
- They feel proud interpreting maps themselves
- They love learning about *children in other countries*
- They enjoy *working together* during fieldwork

Geography at Aston Rowant inspires wonder, connection and confidence.