

Owl Class 'Residential at Home' Week – 2023 Adventure, Teamwork and Creativity Close to Home

Our Residential at Home week offers pupils many of the benefits of an off-site residential - challenge, connection and shared experience - while making the most of our local environment

As part of our residential programme, Owl Class (Years 5 and 6) enjoyed an action-packed 'Residential at Home' week, going off timetable to take part in a full activity and enrichment week designed to challenge, inspire and bring the class together.

Although we alternate residential trips away with an in-school experience in different years, this week proved just how much adventure, fun and learning can happen close to home.

Monday – STEM Engineering Challenge

The week began with a challenging and highly engaging STEM engineering day. Pupils were tasked with scratch-building and customising their own catapults, using lollipop sticks and rubber bands, with the aim of launching a ping-pong ball as far as possible.

In the afternoon, the class assembled their fleet of catapults on the MUGA to test their designs. After evaluating performance, pupils returned to the drawing board to re-engineer and improve their mechanisms, showing impressive resilience, problem-solving and collaboration.

This cycle of testing, reviewing and refining mirrored real engineering processes and encouraged pupils to think critically about design choices.

Tuesday – Flight and Firepit

Tuesday brought a mix of creativity, design and outdoor experience.

In the morning, pupils created large-scale paper planes, experimenting with designs such as Nakamura Lock and Head-Hunter models. They tested how far the planes could fly — with some achieving surprisingly long distances — and discussed how shape and structure affect flight.

In the afternoon, pupils prepared dough for stick bread (Damper) and enjoyed toasting both the bread and marshmallows around the firepit. This shared experience created a real sense of togetherness and calm, echoing key residential traditions.

Wednesday – Local Exploration and Cryptic Challenge

On Wednesday, pupils pulled on their walking boots and set off to explore Aston Rowant and the surrounding area. Along the route, they tackled a series of cryptic clues, each revealing letters that combined to form an anagram.

Solving the final puzzle earned the class a well-deserved ice-cold prize, enjoyed together in the afternoon sunshine. The challenge required teamwork, logical thinking, perseverance and clear communication — skills that were on display throughout the day.

Thursday – Bushcraft and Survival Skills

Thursday saw the class visit Mop End Field Centre for a full day of outdoor learning. Pupils learned a range of bushcraft and survival skills, before working in teams to build dens. When a sudden (watering-can-based!) rainstorm appeared, pupils had to test whether their shelters were up to the task.

The levels of teamwork, cooperation and companionship on display were excellent. It was a real pleasure to see pupils supporting one another, sharing ideas and adapting plans together.

Friday – Creative Challenge and Celebration

The week ended on a wonderfully creative note. Pupils were presented with a large pile of recycling materials and craft resources and given a brief: *create a fashion show*.

Working in groups, pupils designed, built and modelled their creations, before presenting them in a lively Friday afternoon assembly. The event celebrated creativity, collaboration and confidence, providing a joyful end to a very special week.

A Week of Personal Development

Throughout the week, Owl Class demonstrated:

- Excellent teamwork and cooperation
- Resilience when faced with challenge
- Creativity and problem-solving
- Strong friendships and positive relationships

It was a pleasure to watch different personalities come together so naturally, with pupils growing in confidence, independence and mutual respect.

