

Owl Class Residential 2024

In 2024, Owl Class (Year 5/6) experienced an unforgettable week away at Rock UK's Summit Centre, nestled just south of Merthyr Tydfil and surrounded by sweeping hills, woodland and the dramatic landscape of the South Wales valleys. This residential formed a key part of our wider curriculum intent: to nurture resilience, develop character, strengthen teamwork, build independence and broaden children's experiences beyond the classroom.

The location itself provided an inspiring backdrop for learning. From panoramic views to the rich geography of the region, pupils were immersed in an environment that naturally encouraged exploration, challenge and awe.

Why Rock UK? Values that Align with Ours

We chose Rock UK not only for its outstanding facilities and range of adventurous activities, but also because it is a *Christian charity with values that mirror our own*. Their commitment to investing in young people - helping them grow in confidence, perseverance and character - aligns closely with our school's ethos.

This shared focus on compassion, community and aspiration supported a residential experience that was both meaningful and transformative.

A Week of Challenge, Adventure and Growth

Across the week, the children took part in a diverse programme of activities designed to push them physically, mentally and socially. Each activity was carefully structured to support key aspects of the PE, PSHE, and Geography curriculum, as well as the broader *personal development* programme.

Water Sports – Confidence, Communication & Risk-Taking

The children worked in teams on the lake to paddle, steer, and balance on the water. These sessions required trust, clear communication and a willingness to try something new - perfect for developing resilience and overcoming fears.

Climbing & Abseiling – Problem Solving & Perseverance

On the climbing walls and abseil tower, pupils set personal goals, supported one another and celebrated even the smallest successes. This was a powerful example of how structured challenge builds confidence and emotional strength.

Bushcraft – Outdoor Learning & Survival Skills

Children learned how to build shelters, use natural materials, and understand basic outdoor survival principles. This linked closely to Geography topics on human–environment interaction and nurtured respect for the natural world.

Archery – Focus & Hand-Eye Coordination

Archery sessions encouraged concentration, self-discipline and accuracy - valuable skills that transfer back into classroom learning and wider life.

High Ropes – Courage & Team Support

Perhaps the most exhilarating part of the week, the high ropes course challenged pupils to tackle physical obstacles while managing nerves. The way children encouraged one another demonstrated exceptional teamwork and empathy.

Hill Walking – Geography in Real Life

Half a day was dedicated to walking in the South Wales valleys. Pupils observed natural landforms, discussed glaciation, rivers and vegetation, and appreciated the beauty and scale of the landscape. This brought classroom learning vividly to life and nourished physical wellbeing.

Full-Day Caving – Exploration & Resilience

The caving expedition was a standout highlight. Children explored subterranean spaces, learning about rock formations, underground habitats and safety skills. This was an extraordinary opportunity to practise resilience, determination and trust while engaging with genuine geographical fieldwork.

Evening Activities – Community, Friendship & Fun

Each evening continued the spirit of adventure with:

- team challenges that strengthened collaboration
- orienteering, sharpening navigation and map skills
- Ultimate Frisbee, boosting fitness and teamwork
- a lively campfire with songs, dances, toasted marshmallows and hot chocolate

These moments created memories, deepened friendships and provided the perfect blend of fun and reflection after busy days outdoors.

Impact of the Residential – Personal Development & Curriculum Enrichment

By the end of the week, pupils had:

- built remarkable resilience and confidence
- shown determination in the face of challenge
- developed leadership, communication and teamwork skills
- grown in independence and responsibility
- strengthened friendships and community spirit
- experienced a range of adventurous activities that broaden cultural capital
- deepened geographical knowledge through real-world fieldwork
- lived out values such as perseverance, kindness, trust and respect

Staff were incredibly proud of the children's behaviour, maturity and willingness to embrace every challenge. The residential provided rich evidence of our commitment to a broad and balanced curriculum that supports both academic learning and personal development.

A Week to Remember

The week at Summit Centre was truly transformative. Owl Class returned home tired but smiling, proud of their achievements and inspired to seek new experiences in the future. It was a joy to witness their growth, courage and teamwork over the course of the residential.

We have had an incredible time - and the memories, skills and confidence gained this week will stay with the children for years to come.

Photo Diary of the Residential Week

