

Owl Class 'Residential at Home' Week – 2025

Our Residential at Home week offers pupils the shared challenge, excitement and growth of a residential experience, while making the very best use of our school environment and local opportunities

In 2025, Owl Class (Years 5 and 6) embarked on an exciting 'Off-Timetable' Residential at Home week, taking part in a rich programme of activities designed to mirror the challenge, teamwork and shared experiences of an overnight residential - all while based at school. (Our overnight residential returns in 2026.) The week was packed with creativity, problem-solving, outdoor learning and memorable shared experiences, making it a true highlight of the year.

STEM, Engineering and Investigation

The week began with a STEM-focused engineering day, where pupils were challenged to design and test the most efficient paper aeroplane. Children experimented with different designs - including the *Head-hunter* and *Nakamura Lock* - before scaling their planes up to a huge A1 model and investigating how size affected flight distance.

Engineering challenges continued as pupils:

- Built lollipop-stick catapults, using rubber bands to create torque and tension
- Tested and measured distance (with a winning launch of 3.2 metres)
- Refined designs through trial, evaluation and improvement

The day culminated in an exciting science demonstration, where pupils used bicarbonate of soda and vinegar to power their own bottle rockets, launching them proudly for the rest of the school to watch.

These activities encouraged scientific thinking, resilience and collaboration, while showing pupils that learning often comes through experimentation and revision.

Creativity, Reflection and Craft

Another day focused on creativity and reflection as pupils designed and created their own memory pennants - a lasting memento of their time at Aston Rowant School.

Using fabric paint and cloth, pupils:

- Designed meaningful symbols and patterns
- Hand-stitched their pennants to dowelling rods using a running stitch
- Carefully tied house-colour string to complete their flags

The finished pieces were thoughtful, personal and beautifully crafted, and many pupils spoke proudly about what their designs represented.

Cultural Enrichment – Garsington Opera House

Tuesday afternoon provided a change of pace and a wonderful cultural opportunity, as Owl Class visited Garsington Opera House to enjoy an adapted performance of Handel's *Rodelinda*.

The performance was engaging, accessible and inspiring — a real treat for both children and adults — and offered pupils a chance to experience live performance in a professional setting, broadening their cultural horizons.

Sustainability and 'Found Fashion'

Back at school, pupils turned their attention to sustainability with the 'Found Fashion' challenge. After learning that 2.9 tonnes of clothing are wasted globally every second, pupils were tasked with creating haute couture outfits using only bin bags, newspaper and recycled materials.

The creativity on display was exceptional, with designs including:

- Stylish beachwear
- Glamorous party dresses
- Power suits
- Even a dramatic muscle vest

The week culminated in a catwalk parade for Squirrel Class, who were wonderfully supportive as Owl Class confidently described the features, materials and inspiration behind each outfit.

Outdoor Learning, Survival and Shared Meals

Despite the heat, Friday brought yet another unforgettable experience as pupils welcomed Mr Wodzynski and his ferrets for a hands-on day of outdoor learning, animal handling, Q&A and exploration.

Pupils:

- Foraged locally to support their lunch preparation
- Learned about animals and their care
- Built campfires without matches, creating their own sparks
- Cooked venison burgers and prepared fresh salads
- Built shelters, hammocks and outdoor eating spaces

Working together to prepare, cook and eat a shared meal was a powerful experience that promoted independence, cooperation and responsibility.

A Week to Remember

Throughout the week, Owl Class demonstrated:

- Excellent teamwork and collaboration
- Creativity and problem-solving
- Resilience and perseverance
- Confidence and independence
- Strong friendships and mutual support

It was a pleasure to see the children working together so positively, adapting to challenges and making the most of every opportunity.

