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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



9th January 2026

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.

INSET day

INSET (In-service Education and Training) days are key moments in the school calendar when pupils enjoy an extra day at home while staff come together to learn, reflect, and plan for the year ahead. These days—usually five across the academic year—give teachers and support staff valuable time for professional development, collaboration, and the chance to explore new ideas that help shape the future of our school community.

On Monday this week, our teachers and TAs joined colleagues from across the Thame Partnership for a dedicated day of training, sharing expertise before returning to school with fresh ideas and renewed energy. The event brought everyone together for two inspiring keynote speeches and a broad selection of workshops which included:

Key-note speaker - Adrian Bethune - the founder of Teachappy which promotes happiness and wellbeing to schools and communities, empowering others to lead healthier, happier lives both in and outside the classroom.

Key-note speaker - Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) - the aim of ensuring that every child enjoys an amazing hour of high-quality outdoor play every day, so that children's physical and mental wellbeing, is addressed comprehensively, sustainably.

AI Workshop - How Artificial Intelligence (AI) can support learning and teaching in a primary school setting.

African Drumming Workshop - Hands-on experience of African drumming and tips for teaching it to children of all ages.

The Language of De-escalation Workshop - An introduction to the 'Norfolk steps' approach to managing challenging behaviour.

Developing Resilience: Defining Success in Practical Activities Workshop – Strategies to practically build behavioural skills for resilience in teaching and learning.

Barriers Facing Attendance Within School Settings Workshop - Support and guidance for attendance management from the Oxfordshire Attendance Team.

Oracy in Maths Workshop - Practical ideas and strategies on how to develop oracy in Maths lessons.

Thame Partnership

Belonging to Thame Partnership is a great strength of our school community. It brings together one secondary school and thirteen primary schools, and creates a powerful network where ideas, expertise, and resources benefit every child. The Headteachers meet bi-monthly to plan, discuss and strategise, ensuring that our schools move forward with shared purpose and ambition. From September 2025, I was delighted to take on the role of chairing this dedicated group.

The partnership offers a wealth of opportunities: from our joint INSET day that brings teachers and TAs together for high-quality training; to termly meetings for all subject coordinators; and regular moderation in English and Maths for every year group, ensuring consistency and excellence across our schools. We also benefit from shared resources—particularly in IT—which allow us to work more efficiently and creatively.

Perhaps most exciting are the partnership-wide events that enrich pupils' experiences: cross-school sports competitions, the ever-popular Festival of Music, the Poetry Slam competition, the Dance Festival, and our incredible Science Day. These occasions enhance the curriculum offering and give children the chance to shine, collaborate, and feel part of something bigger.

The Thame Partnership offers the best of both worlds: the strength and support of close collaboration, much like being part of an academy, while allowing each school to maintain its own unique identity, vision and values. It is a community that benefits us all, and we are proud to be an active part of it.

Kind regards

Mrs France

GRATITUDE RESILIENCE OUTREACH WONDER TRUST HARMONY

Growing together, rooted in God, enjoying fullness of life. (Colossians 2:1-7)

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Teaching and Learning in the Classrooms this week:



Hedgehog Class

This week Hedgehog Class have dived headfirst into our exciting new topic Kings, Queens and Castles! We were delighted to meet Queen Wobblebottom, who has set the children lots of important royal tasks. So far, the children have been busy making designs to build her a brand-new castle, making armour ready for battle, and even chopping bananas for the royal monkeys! In Drawing Club, we are exploring a range of castle stories to develop rich story language, which the children are then using in their own narratives during play in our role-play castle. In Topic, we are learning about what a King or Queen does and finding out a little more about King Charles. In Maths, the children have been making castle steps using different materials to explore the concept of *one more*, showing great curiosity and problem-solving skills. To support our learning, we would be very grateful for donations of large boxes so that we can build large-scale castles and forts outside (I'm sure there may be a few left over from Christmas presents!). We also need lots of cardboard tubes, so any donations would be very welcome. This term we will be focusing on developing knife and fork skills, alongside continuing to build confidence in our writing skills. Please see our topic web and the website for more information on how you can help support learning at home. Thank you for your continued support 😊



Squirrel Class

Welcome back for the Spring term! It has been lovely to see all the children again after the winter break and it's great to see the class ready for new challenges and learning in the coming months. In Maths, the Year 1 children have been working hard to complete their learning on place value to 20, using a variety of concrete resources to explore teen numbers in particular. Meanwhile the Year 2 have been exploring money and developing their understanding of coins and their values. As a class, we have started our exciting new topic, *What is a Monarch?*, where we learnt about the role and responsibilities of a monarch. In Art, we explored famous sculptures from around the world and sketched our favourites into our books, showing great creativity and attention to detail. During worship, we reflected on new beginnings and linked these to our own New Year's resolutions, thinking about positive changes we would like to make. A positive start to 2026!



Fox Class

We have hit the ground running this half term. The whole class are thoroughly invested in our new History topic which was introduced via our English text 'The Chocolate Tree'. This week, the children have been crafting similes that sparkle like jewels, bringing their descriptions to life! Over in Science, we explored the incredible human skeleton, learning all about the different types of joints that help us move. To make our learning hands-on, we created our own skeletons out of card and split pins—perfect for showing where those clever joints are hiding! In History, we've embarked on an exciting journey into the world of the Ancient Maya civilisation, uncovering their fascinating culture, traditions, and achievements. We will become detectives, investigating what was happening in Britain at the same time—comparing two very different worlds across the globe! Art has been a feast for the senses as we studied the stunning work of textile artists Hannah Rae and Alice Kettle. Inspired by their techniques, we've begun creating vibrant paintings embellished with embroidery—watch this space for some masterpieces! In RE, we've started thinking deeply about special places and what they mean to us and others, sparking thoughtful discussions and questions. The snowy weather brought a twist to our outdoor PE session on Tuesday and transformed it into calming yoga indoors, while gymnastics on Thursday continued as usual. It's been a week full of learning, laughter, and creativity—what a fantastic start to the term!



Owl Class

Straight into a busy half term, pupils have been working hard across the new curriculum. In English, children explored how language can be used to persuade. They analysed a range of adverts—including holidays, food and recruitment—to identify target audiences and the techniques used to influence readers. In Maths, Year 5 have been developing their understanding of short division with exchanges, building confidence through clear, structured practice as they use this understanding in a range of problem solving activities. Year 6 began using the long division method, identifying number patterns and chunking numbers into smaller parts. Although challenging, the children have quickly risen to the task and have shown impressive progress. In History, the children explored created a timeline of the local area and mapped significant events across many eras (Stone Age, Roman, Tudor Victorian etc) and used maps to see what they could decode about the local area from its layout or place names: did you know we have a Roman settlement a few miles away? Did you know that a place name ending in 'borough' meant that it was a fortified Saxon town? Mr Manning didn't either! This really inspires the children to think about projects for our Big Project, which the details of can be found on the Owl Class Page. In RE we explored how the mosque plays an integral part of the Islamic sense of community or belonging, and how it can provide structure as to how the worshippers can pray. In ICT, the children began to explore how to programme in variables into video games, as well as altering sprites to design and create their own version of the game 'Score!'. All this in only four days! Enjoy your well-earned weekend, Owl Class.

GRATITUDE RESILIENCE OUTREACH WONDER TRUST HARMONY

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Photo Diary of the Week



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Whole School Topic - Autumn Term: A Sense of Belonging

Value: 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

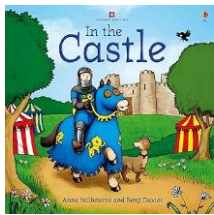
Let's take on 2026 with optimism and hope ... why not start with the great news on renewables. Globally, for the first time, renewables produced more electricity than coal in the first half of 2025. In the UK, nearly 30% of our UK electricity, in 2025, was generated from wind power, and 6% from solar. The world runs on energy ... and clean energy is unstoppable! Maybe check out this prize-winning sustainable biofuel project – [SeaH4](#) – creating biofuel - for marine and aviation transport - using algae cultivated in ponds.

How will **YOUR** 2026 story unfold? Children are challenged to create a 2026 origami 'chatterbox' and then launch the 'great unfolding' by playing the game with members of their family – helping stimulate climate conversations.

Related links:

[Folding paper: making 'chatterboxes' - Art for kids hub](#)

Book Review – Hedgehog Class



We really liked this book! It is about a little boy who is playing in a broken castle and then he gets whisked back in time. Suddenly the castle is very busy and lots of people are building it. We loved looking at all the pictures and spotting what was happening. The children think the book has brilliant pictures by Axel Scheffler and it teaches us lots about castles. One child said, "I want to make a shield like that one!" This book gave us lots of ideas for our own castle play and made us want to learn even more.

Happiness Calander: 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	94%	0%	6%
Squirrel Class	89%	0%	11%
Fox Class	90%	0%	10%
Owl Class	84%	0%	16%

Housepoints

House	This Week	Total
Bethlehem	23	23
Eden	20	20
Galilee	20	20
Jerusalem	14	14

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Merit | 2024 - 2025Green Tree School
Bronze Award

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Growing Together

Emails and Letters Sent this Week

Date	Email/Letter	For	From	Concerning
09/01/26	Email/Letter	Reception	Office	Action - Vision Screening Programme for Reception children
09/01/26	Email/Letter	Reception & Y6	Office	Action - National Child Measurement Programme
07/01/26	Email	All	Office	Collective Worship
07/01/26	Email	Owls	Mr Manning	Big Project homework

January

Mon 5 th	INSET day
Tue 6 th	TERM STARTS
Mon 12 th	Student teachers start – Miss Adams (Owl) and Miss Hand (Fox)
Wed 21 st	FGB
Tue 27 th	18:00-19:30 Maths Parent Workshop
Thu 29 th	Height and weight measurements EYFS & Y6

February

2 nd – 6 th	World Interfaith Week
9 th – 13 th	Children's Mental Health Week – 'This is my Place'
Tues 10 th	Internet Safety Day – 'Artificial Intelligence'
Mon 16 th – Fri 20 th	Half Term
Fri 27 th	PTA Quiz Night

March

Wed 4 th	World Book Day - Symphony of Stories
Fri 6 th	International Women's Day of Prayer – Nigeria
9 th – 13 th	National Science Week – 'Space'
Wed 18 th	Poetry Slam Competition Oxfordshire Cricket Club Day
Fri 21 st	Red Nose Day – wear your jumper or cardigans back to front for a donation to Comic Relief
Wed 25 th	FGB
Mon 23 rd – 27 th	RE Enrichment Week
Fri 27 th	Spring Service in Church

Academic Year Calendar 2025-26

Autumn 25

Mon 1 st Sept – Fri 24 th Oct	Autumn Term (1) INSET 1 st and 2 nd Sept
Mon 27 th – Fri 31 st Oct	HALF TERM
Mon 3 rd Nov – Fri 19 th Dec	Autumn Term (2)

Spring 26

Mon 5 th Jan – Fri 13 ^h Feb	Spring Term (1) INSET Mon 5 th Jan
Mon 16 th – Fri 20 th Feb	HALF TERM
Mon 23 rd Feb – Fri 27 th Mar	Spring Term (2)

Summer 26

Mon 13 th April – Fri 22 nd May	Summer Term (1) INSET Fri 22 nd May
Mon 25 th May – Fri 29 th May	HALF TERM
Mon 1 st June – Fri 17 th July	Summer Term (2) INSET Mon 20 th July

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