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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



6th February 2026

From the Headteacher

World Interfaith Harmony Week 2026

This week, people all around the world have been joining in World Interfaith Harmony Week — a special global celebration created by the United Nations to help us remember something simple but powerful: even though we may all believe different things, we can still work together, learn from each other, and spread kindness wherever we go. In school, we've been joining in the fun with activities that helped us explore what brings people together. Our Shared Values Kindness Paperchain turned into a colourful masterpiece, with every child in the school adding their own message of kindness, respect or encouragement. In our What We Share circle times, children discussed what makes them feel part of a group, and how people can get along brilliantly even when their ideas or backgrounds aren't the same. We also travelled the world through books during Storytime From Around the World! The stories encouraged everyone to celebrate friendship, understanding and the amazing differences that make our world interesting. All these activities encouraged our children to think about empathy, unity, and the joy of welcoming others — the very heart of this worldwide celebration.

Garsington Opera

We are incredibly proud of our ongoing partnership with Garsington Opera, a nationally celebrated company known for creating worldclass productions in the stunning natural setting of the Wormsley Estate. Their Youth Company offers young people the rare chance to work side-by-side with professional singers, musicians and directors, taking part in truly ambitious productions that blend expert artistry with community involvement. Last year, several of our pupils joined the cast of *A Trip to the Moon*, a spectacular family friendly opera inspired by Georges Méliès' 1902 film, performed with the Philharmonic Orchestra and led by acclaimed director Karen Gillingham and conductor Douglas Boyd. One of our own pupils, Harry, even took on a leading role - an extraordinary achievement and an experience none of the children will ever forget. Many from last year's cast have continued with the Youth Company, and this year's production promises to be just as exciting. We are delighted that the Garsington team will be returning to school for auditions, and all pupils in Years 4-6 will have the chance to take part. Opportunities like this - performing in a professional opera environment, building confidence, developing musicianship, and being part of something truly magical - are exceptionally rare, and we are thrilled to offer them to our children, through this special partnership.

Holidays

We are increasingly seeing patterns of repeated absence requests, particularly in the weeks leading up to February half term. We also receive requests that cite the educational value of holidays or important family occasions. However, once a child is registered at school, the law is clear that they must attend school **every day and on time**. Our expectation is that all pupils achieve at least **97%** attendance across the academic year, and this figure already includes time off for illness. The curriculum is full and carefully planned across the year, with learning building step by step. Taking a week off school can mean that key concepts are missed and may not be revisited, which can significantly impact a child's ability to access future learning. For this reason, holidays during term time cannot be authorised, and we strongly urge families to plan holidays within the published school holiday dates. These dates are published over a year in advance and are available on the school website.

Finally...Thank you card from Miss Williams

"May I say a huge thank you for the incredibly touching farewell that you all gave me. I have never experienced anything like it and I was utterly blown away, please know that it will stay in my heart forever. I have been honoured to work at Aston Rowant school – the spirit of the place is so happy and special... it is irreplaceable in my life and I'm so proud to have worked with you all, parents, staff and above all else, the children. You are so special to me. The cards, messages and gifts - oh my goodness, such heartfelt generosity! Thank you from the bottom of my heart. My new home is lovely and I have visited the seaside multiple times and also had some lovely walks in the Somerset countryside. Just behind my house is a wildflower meadow (not many at this time of year) and beyond that is an ancient woodland. I have seen some great fungi, beautiful trees covered in lichen and the ferns are huge! Living within easy reach of the coast is a treat that I don't think I shall ever get bored of. To be able to sit on the seafront with a hot chocolate is an absolute delight.



For now, to finish, thank you once again for everything. With so much love and good wishes, Miss Williams."

Kind regards

Mrs France

GRATITUDE RESILIENCE OUTREACH WONDER TRUST HARMONY

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Teaching and Learning in the Classrooms this week:



Hedgehog Class

Hedgehog Class have had a wonderfully busy and creative week of learning. In Phonics, the children consolidated the sounds j, v, w and x, showing growing confidence in recognising and using them. English was full of excitement as the class started practising for the Poetry Slam competition: they listened to a range of poems, voted for their favourite and have been practising and learning it together ready to perform to the whole school next week. In Maths, the children explored the composition of 5 through the Five Speckled Frogs rhyme, confidently working out how many frogs were on the log and how many were in the pool. In RE, the class continued learning about celebrations, focusing on Holi and Chinese New Year, bringing the stories to life by acting them out - with the children playing the different animals and even becoming the river! Music lessons linked beautifully with English as the children practised clapping rhythms to familiar songs and poems, including The Grand Old Duke of York, and enjoyed clapping out their own names in a rhythmic circle game. To round off the week, topic learning sparked curiosity as the children began asking and exploring the question, "Who was Henry VIII?" - a fantastic start to their historical thinking.



Squirrel Class

Squirrel class have really enjoyed creating their poems for this year's Thame Partnership Poetry Slam! We brainstormed ideas as a class and then the children decided if they wished to work as a group, partners or solo. We had a few days to practise and then performed them to the class. Well-done to all of the class for participating so well and trying their best. In Maths the Y1 children have been consolidating subtraction again, either using counters (to take away) or on a number line (counting back). The Y2 children have been continuing with work on multiplication, and we looked at how multiplication is essentially repeated addition. We also discussed the multiplication symbol (x) and the mathematical language that can be used for it. In History we had a mini art gallery of all the wonderful castles that children had created as part of their home learning and took the time to identify some of the features of a castle that the designs had incorporated such as portcullises, battlements and moats. In Science we identified the differences between deciduous and evergreen trees and measured the leaves of these trees using non-standard units (blocks). We identified that evergreen leaves are usually thick, waxy, and retained year-round, whereas deciduous leaves are typically broader, thinner, and shed annually in autumn. Lastly, in Art we have planned our sculptures that are to be completed next week to finish off our topic.



Fox Class

Fox Class blew my socks off this week with their amazing descriptive writing! We have started to look at Rain Player, and we initially focussed on the setting for the story and we looked at a range of sentence types, and they all enjoyed playing with the words, exploring the effect it gave to the reader. We also fine-tuned our dialogue writing by adding in a new scene to the story. In Maths, both year groups were working on length; Year 3 worked on their equivalent measurements (converting mm to cm and cm to m). This could be an opportunity at home for you to practise as it can be quite tricky! Year 4 enjoyed working out the perimeters of rectilinear shapes (ask them what they are!). In our History, we learnt about the many inventions the ancient Maya designed then made a diamond 9 choosing which they thought were the most important. They had to justify their reasoning too. In Science, children learnt about nutrient groups rather than food groups. They made a little booklet showing the food and what benefit we got from the nutrients. In our Art, the paint came out! Children painted their Mayan scene and next week they will sew on detail. I can't wait to see what they will achieve. What a busy old week!



Owl Class

Building periscopes was our class aim in Science with Miss Adams, using our understanding of reflection and our DT skills. This also linked to our English topic of persuasion (we looked at adverts for WWI periscopes). Later in English, we began to plan our non-chronological report about the ship Endurance - looking at sub-headings, grouping text together and relative clauses to create a cohesive write. In Maths, the children completed their unit on multiplication and division of fractions, and how to find a fraction of an amount - a great chance to break out Mr M's favourite - the bar model! In ICT, we looked at planning our own video game based on a design brief, which required plenty of use of our variables to keep score, count down the time and predict what might happen to our sprites. In French, we identified and described a series of monsters and where they were lurking within the house whilst in Music the Owls kept time with Miss Bergmeier, studying rhythms and minims. Art found us using colour to create colour frames, and how we can paint the classroom with light, using only acetate sheets and a little bit of sunlight. Finally, as it was Interfaith Week, we heard and acted out the story of Abdul and his Three Sons, a story from around the world that linked to regaining trust, and building a sense of belonging within a family unit. What a week!

GRATITUDE RESILIENCE OUTREACH WONDER TRUST HARMONY

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Photo Diary of the Week



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Whole School Topic - Spring Term: A Sense of Belonging

Value: Trust

In Collective Worship this week, we focused on the idea that good friends stand by one another. We looked at a passage from Ecclesiastes which reminds us that “Two are better than one... If one person falls, the other can reach out and help.” Throughout the week, we’ve been thinking about what it means to be someone others can depend on—someone trustworthy who doesn’t let their friends down. We also reflected on how Christians place their trust in Jesus, believing that he will never fail them. The Bible often uses images of strength and steadiness to describe God, comparing him to a rock, an anchor, and a strong tower—symbols of protection and reliability.

Climate Warriors’ Challenge

As the Winter Olympics kicks-off in Italy, discussion turns to the carbon emissions of the games, the carbon footprints of the sponsors, and the negative environmental impacts of spectator travel. Many see the irony in winter sports being compromised by our changing climate and yet the carbon intensity of the events exacerbating our climate crisis.

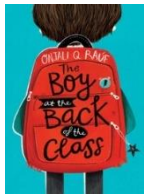
Our Earth is in injury time - can the spirit of sport help change the score? An increasing number of athletes are speaking out about climate change ... their influence could be huge. 2025 BBC Green Sport Awards recognised Hector Pardoe (British swimmer), Hector Bellerin (Spanish footballer), and Formula E (electric motor-racing) ... all leading the way in environmental sustainability.

Let’s head outside to the park - play football, set up an obstacle course, design a race-track ... drink hot chocolate under a tree, or spot animal prints in the mud ... take time away from our digital devices.

Reading Missions Challenge

February’s challenge is: Tell someone about a book you love. Why do you love it so much?

Book Review – The Boy at the Back of the Class by Onjali Q. Rauf & Pippa Curnick



This is a truly lovely story with themes of refugees and inclusion. It is pitched perfectly to build empathy, promote kindness, and encourage readers to challenge stereotypes and question opinions that may not be based on fact. Ahmet is a refugee and is given a previously empty seat at the back of the class when he starts a new school. He is befriended by the narrator of the story. Through the story, we learn about Ahmet’s background and the ups and downs of integrating into a new school. Kindness and friendship triumph, and the story develops empathy and encourages human connection. A great story for KS2 children.

Happiness Calander: Friendly February

This month let’s focus on reaching out to connect with others and doing our best to be a good friend. Our acts of kindness and connection ripple out and impact so many more people than we realise. In stressful times people around us may be feeling the strain, so let’s try to keep calm, take time to listen and show compassion. You can find this month’s happiness calendar [here](#).

Attendance – This week

School target 97%	97% - 100%	90% -97%	Below 90%
Hedgehog Class	88%	0%	12%
Squirrel Class	85%	8%	7%
Fox Class	90%	0%	10%
Owl Class	80%	0%	20%

Housepoints

House	This Week	Total
Bethlehem	54	182
Eden	50	182
Galilee	49	181
Jerusalem	52	151

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Growing Together

Emails and Letters Sent this Week

Date	Email/Letter	For	From	Concerning
06.02.26	Email	All	Office	PTA Minutes & Volunteer form
06.02.26	Email	Reception & Y6	Office	NCMP screening results for R & Y6
06.02.26	Email	All	Office	Oxford Brookes Science Bazaar
02.02.26	Email	All	Office	JR – 1 free football trial
02.02.26	Email	Fox	Mrs France	Spring term 2

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'
Fri 13 th	Bird Watch
Mon 16 th – Fri 20 th	Half Term
Tues 24 th	Auditions for Garsington Opera Youth Company Years 4-6
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 Bags2School collection
9 th – 13 th	National Science Week – 'Space'
Fri 13 th	Children wear spring coloured top and make an Easter raffle donation to PTA (Requested donations – eggs/chocolates, Easter crafts/colouring or soft toys – chicks/bunnies)
Wed 18 th	Poetry Slam Competition Oxfordshire Cricket Club Day
Fri 20 th	Red Nose Day – wear your jumper or cardigans back to front for a donation to Comic Relief PTA Easter themed Raffle draw
Wed 25 th	FGB
Mon 23 rd – 27 th	RE Enrichment Week
Fri 27 th	Spring Service in Church PTA Film/Craft afternoon: 13:30 – 15:15

NEW DATES

Academic Year Calendar 2026-27

Autumn 26	
Tue 1 st Sept – Fri 23 rd Oct	Autumn Term (1) INSET DAYS: Tue 1 st Sep, Wed 2 nd Sept and Fri 23 rd Oct
Mon 26 th Oct – Fri 30 th Oct	HALF TERM
Mon 2 nd Nov – Fri 18 th Dec	Autumn Term (2)
Spring 27	
Mon 4 th Jan – Fri 12 th Feb	Spring Term (1) INSET Mon 4 th Jan
Mon 15 th – Fri 19 th Feb	HALF TERM
Mon 22 nd Feb – Thu 25 th Mar	Spring Term (2)
Summer 27	
Mon 12 th April – Fri 28 th May	Summer Term (1)
Mon 31 st May – Fri 4 th Jun	HALF TERM
Mon 7 th June – Wed 21 st July	Summer Term (2) INSET Mon 7 th Jun

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