

— 11th September 2026 —

Grendon Gazette



Welcome Back!

What a lovely start we have had to the new school year! It has been wonderful to welcome our children and families back to school and to see the classrooms, playground and corridors full of smiles, energy and excitement once again.

A particularly warm welcome goes to all our new children, families and members of staff who have joined the Grendon Underwood School community. We hope you are already beginning to feel at home and part of our school family.

I have been incredibly proud of how well the children have settled back into their routines. They have returned with such positive attitudes towards their learning and have shown kindness and care towards one another.

As we begin this new academic year, our focus remains on ensuring that every child feels safe, happy, valued and ready to learn. We are looking forward to another year filled with learning, laughter, new experiences and plenty of opportunities to celebrate the wonderful things our children achieve.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Working together as families, staff and children makes our school the special community that it is.

Here's to a happy and successful year ahead!

INSIDE, WE ALSO TALK ABOUT:

Key dates

School improvements

OPAL Update

Important Date or Events



What: Macmillian Coffee morning
When: Friday 25th September 2026
Where: School Dining Hall

Key dates for the Autumn term 2026

11/09/2026	XYZ interactive live music experience 11 am -12 noon
18/09/2026	Year 6 ambassador presentations
25/09/2026	Macmillan Coffee morning - All welcome - please bring cakes in! Years 3 and 4 Bikeability
01/10/2026	Individual school photos taken
09/10/2026	11+ results sent to parents
14/10/2026	Harvest celebration in school 10:15 am Provision donations for Bicester Food Bank
19/10/2026	Years 5 and 6 Bikeability
21/10/2025	Parent/Carer Consultations 3:30-7:30
22/10/2025	Parent/Carer Consultations 3:30-5:00 (start at 1.30pm for Yr 6)
23/10/2025	End of term
26/10/26 - 30/10/26	School holiday
31/10/2026	Deadline to submit your child's secondary transfer application
02/11/2026	Back to school
12/11/2026	Nursery rhyme evening 4.45 - 6 pm.
13/11/2026	Children in Need
21/11/2026	Saturday open day for potential new families 10 am - 12 noon

The school calendar can be found on the website:

<https://www.gucs.org.uk/calendar/?calid=2&pid=6&viewid=2>

School Improvements

Healthy Snacks and Drinks

From this term, we will be asking that children only have **fruit or vegetables for their breaktime snack**. We kindly ask that packaged snacks are not brought into school.

We would also like to remind families that **water is the only drink that should be brought into school in children's water bottles**.

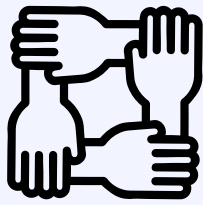
Fruit juices and Smoothies are fine for lunch boxes. Children will continue to have regular opportunities and encouragement to drink throughout the school day.

If your child has any dietary or medical requirements, please speak to your child's teacher.

Supporting Healthy Minds

Alongside supporting children's physical health, we are increasingly mindful of the amount of screen time children experience. As a school, we want to ensure that we provide plenty of opportunities for children to learn, communicate, play, explore and build positive relationships away from screens. We will therefore take a more considered approach to the use of screens in school, ensuring that technology is used purposefully to enhance children's learning.

OPAL Update



On our first inset day, all staff completed training with our OPAL Mentor. We will slowly be introducing new play zones and will continue to be supported by our mentor.

What the children are gravitating towards already:

Litter pickers

Climber

Things that can be pulled or pushed e.g. crates

Things that can be thrown e.g. rockets and balls.

(Lots of types of play already identified.)

Observations/comments from children and staff:

Some children are still enjoying solitary or quieter play by the buildings, but certain children are now trialling different types of play with the introduction of more equipment.

Would like more skipping ropes, but rope skipping ropes as plastic 'hurts' legs.

Children have largely enjoyed mixing with other year groups.

Faster lunchtimes – new system seems to be effective, although some children are 'missing' the lunch bell depending on where they are on the playground.

Lunchtimes are positively louder – more evidence of play and excitement.

When asked, children would like more of the equipment provided – supporting larger group play, e.g. a few hula hoops could be replaced.

All children are enjoying role play; each day the role play is being extended.



Celebration Assemblies



My Happy Minds wristband are awarded to one child each week – this is awarded to someone who has taken an active role in Monday's lesson and applies the learning in class and around the school.

We will no longer be giving out 'Star of the Week' certificates. We are moving away from certificates that award being the best or top in something and are moving to recognising personal growth and values. So the new certificates will be known as 'You Shine' certificates – One pupil, per class will be awarded with the certificate each week – these are now going to be values based – as you know, our school values are kindness, courage and responsibility. Each week, one person who has demonstrated something that relates to one of the three values will be awarded and in Friday's assembly, teachers will say why they have been chosen.

On Wednesday, teachers will dojo both parents and invite them into Friday's assembly at 9 am

We will no longer be speaking about reading and times tables in assembly, and so no certificates will be given out for this. Teachers will still check that reading is completed each week and will message parents with polite reminders.