

Great Milton CE Primary School Newsletter

Celebrating learning, community, and Christian values

DATE: 7TH SEPTEMBER 2026 ISSUE: AUTUMN TERM, WEEK 2

Headteacher's Message

"Let all that you do be done in love." – 1 Corinthians 16:14

Welcome back to a new school year at Great Milton. I hope you had a fabulous summer break. It was wonderful to see all of the children return last week rested and raring to go!

We welcome all of our new Elf Owl families and new families in Barn Owls and Eagle Owls. You will find Great Milton a very welcoming school with many people on hand to help you settle in. If you are not on the class whatsapp group, make that known and you will be swiftly added.

New Staff

Our Senior Leadership Team looks a little different this year, due to Mrs Green taking up the Head of School role at Little Milton School for one year. We are in regular contact with Sue and she sends you all her very best wishes for the coming year.

- Mrs Nicola Bennett has moved into the acting Deputy Head role for this year.
- Mrs Hughes, our SENCO has joined the Senior Leadership Team to support the strategic school improvement.

Our front of house team looks a little different this year, due to the retirement of Mrs Biel.

- Mrs Jodie Batson has moved into the position of Office Manager Monday to Friday.
- Mrs Emily Grant has joined the team as Office Assistant Wednesday to Friday to make up the other half of Mrs Tracy Green who is still in this role Monday and Tuesday.

We also welcome new teaching and support staff to our [GM Team](#):

- Mrs Bird Field – Snowy Owls Teacher (Y3)
- Mrs Jo Marrison – Eagle Owls Teacher (Y5)
- Mr Ryan Salt- Eagle Owls Teaching Assistant (Y5)
- Mrs Claire Pope- Hawk Owls Teaching Assistant (Y6)
- Miss Olivia John: Elf Owls Teaching Assistant (YR)

Changes and Improvements

We have made a few changes and improvements to the way we approach things for this academic year, based on schools we have visited as part of our CPD, research we have completed over the last couple of years and our commitment to improving good practice.

Loving to Learn

Our [Curriculum Vision](#) document has been in action for a few years now and clearly outlines the approach we take to learning at Great Milton.

Our aim is for every child to develop a love of learning across the curriculum so they become creative and confident in applying their skills and knowledge in a range of contexts. In our school we encourage children to think deeply, be inquisitive and to ask questions.

To live this out in practice even further, we have tweaked the first 15 minutes of our morning routine in KS2 to maximise opportunities for creativity, collaboration and critical thinking. As soon as the children come into their class they will select the learning they engage in and have autonomy over who they learn with during this time. This is the approach taken in Early Years and KS1 and we find the positive start increases enjoyment and confidence for the rest of the day.

Loving to Learn at Home (formerly known as Homework)

We are reviewing our approach to homework so that it reflects our aim that children 'love to learn' beyond the classroom. Children should be motivated to continue learning at home and want to share their learning with those around them (i.e. you!) and this can not be achieved by sending out a printed worksheet as homework. This could be their own ideas in response to their learning in class or ideas shared by their classteacher which they can bring into the classroom to share.

Time at home should be an opportunity to play, to pursue personal hobbies and passions as well as practise key skills such as reading, spelling and number facts that need more repetition to embed than school allows. Spelling lists will be shared, to provide opportunity to practise, but the traditional 'learning for a spelling test' has changed to improve long term spelling rule knowledge and application. Number facts to practise will also be shared.

We are introducing '*Learning Missions*' this term, which will be shared once each class teacher has introduced the concept to their children.

The Great Milton Way

Our '[Behaviour Blueprint](#)' outlines our consistent approach to routines and expectations. Predictable adult responses and clear expectations lead to the calm and safe environment we experience in school. This came out of the work we focused on last term with Paul Dix Pivotal Education.

One aspect of school life that we have been gradually changing over the last academic year is our reward systems. Token rewards are not consistent and the value of them can wax and wane as the year progresses. Children can become demoralised if they are rewarded one week and not the next and can feel a sense of injustice if someone is rewarded and they are not. It becomes a focus of being noticed rather than being their best self and feeling proud of that. We have noticed a vast majority of children switching off during celebration worship because they are not being celebrated.

This term we are switching the focus to increase the intrinsic value of praise for doing the right thing, trying their best or achieving something for the first time. Children will be recognised and praised by many adults in school for their efforts and for following the Great Milton Way or showing our school values.

Each class has its own way of recognising positive behaviour and working together, such as adding a lego brick to a collective creation or a simple recognition board. A heartfelt 'well done' often has more impact than a token reward.

In collective worship we want to encourage children to feel confident and proud enough to share their passions and hobbies with others. Every child in our school has a special interest or talent that they spend their spare time enjoying and we want to learn more about these passions. Children will be encouraged to present their passion to our school family and inspire others to try it. This could be anything from playing a musical instrument to crochet.

For this term, there will be **no celebration worship** while we embed this new way of celebrating each other and praising differently. There will be other opportunities for you to celebrate your child's learning this term and also a Harvest celebration worship to enjoy in the meantime.

OPAL

We are very excited to be starting our Outdoor Play and Learning journey this term. Part of this has been funded by FOGMS thanks to your support of fundraising events last year. This initiative will make '20% of our school day 100% better' and is something we have wanted to do for some time. We will keep you updated regularly as we progress through the programme and invite you in to experience playtime in school. For more information on OPAL, you can read this book: [*Creating Excellence in Primary School Playtimes* by Michael Follett](#); or see OPAL schools in action on YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/OPALPlaytime

School Lunches

Towards the end of the Summer Term we had a new cook; James. James was a chef at Le Manoir during his career and he has elevated the quality of our school dinners tenfold! If your child has previously tried school dinners and didn't like them, I would highly recommend trying them again. I now have a school dinner regularly and enjoy sitting with the children to eat and socialise. Firm favourites include: Chicken Korma; Mac & Cheese; Bolognese (both veggie and non-veggie); meatballs (both veggie and non-veggie) and the Wednesday Roast is delicious! Have a look at the menu [here](#).

We are all excited for the new school year ahead and seeing the benefits of the changes we have made to our routines and systems. As with any changes, it will take time to adjust, so please be patient and remain positive.

With very best wishes,
Alyson Frost
Headteacher

Collective Worship

We are starting the new school year focusing on our value of Courage. It can take courage to take on a challenge. In school we call it 'stepping out of our comfort zone', which is where the most progress is made. Sometimes a small step can take us to new and exciting places!

Rooted in the Christian faith is the belief that God is present in every situation. This belief has led to great acts of courage.

'Be Strong and Courageous; do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.' Joshua 1:9

You can access the Home School Values resource for courage [here](#) to discuss over dinner.

Upcoming events...

Date	Event
Thurs 17th Sept	Elf Parents Phonics Workshop in school hall 2-3pm
Mon 28th-2nd Oct	Hawk Owls Bikeability
Thurs 1st Oct	Elf Parents Maths Workshop in school hall 9-10am
Wed 7th Oct	Open Afternoon 1.30pm (tell your friends!)
Fri 9th Oct	Flu Vaccinations am Harvest Worship- please join us at 2.45pm
Wed 14th Oct	Open Morning 9.30am (tell your friends!)
Wed 21st Oct	Individual School Photos am
Mon 26th-Fri 30th Oct	Half Term

Parent Notices

- **Communication Reminders**
 - The first port of call for parents is always the class teacher.
 - Phone the school office to arrange a time to meet, or email **FOR THE ATTENTION OF...** and your email will be passed on.

- Any concerns can then be directed to the SENCO, Pastoral Lead or Deputy Head before being escalated to the Headteacher, unless it is a significant safeguarding concern.
- We are all very good at communicating with each other in school, so we will often discuss and plan who will deal with a concern most effectively.
- **Celebration Worship: No Celebration Worship** this term while we try out our new systems and get the children involved. We will let you know when we are ready to start them up again.
- **Packed Lunches and Snacks:** Please try extra hard this academic year to make sure your child's [lunch box](#) is as healthy as possible and reduce the amount of packaging. Reusable plastic pots or eco-friendly reusable wrappings are great for packed lunches.
- **Forest School:** Mrs Dickson has completed her Forest School Leader Qualification and will be leading sessions across the school this academic year. We are still hoping to welcome Mrs Howlett back to school as soon as possible.
 - Forest School clothes should be long sleeved and long legged. Waterproofs and wellies are essential. A change of dry clothes is essential.
 - There is a very warm, reversible school fleece/waterproof on the [website link](#). Not compulsory.
- **PE Kits:** A reminder that PE kits should be dark blue tops and black bottoms. We have a school logo hoodie and track suit top on the [website link](#), which is very warm, but not compulsory. Please make sure your child has a change of clothes, especially shoes, now that the weather is wet.
- **Shoes:** Please make sure your child has outdoor shoes, trainers or wellies for playtimes so they can wear their **clean school shoes inside**.

FOGMS

Huge thanks to the Friends of Great Milton School for all of their fundraising last academic year and to you, for supporting all of their events. We have spent some money on the launch of the OPAL project, bought some percussion instruments to teach the music curriculum and bought some new Tuff Trays and Sand and Water trays for EYFS & KS1. We will keep you updated on other spending throughout the year. We really are very grateful to you all for the fundraising you achieve! FOGMS have organised the Autumn Clear Up event for Saturday 26th October between 10am and 2pm. See you there!