



AMAZING ROAD

*Creating the
foundations to build
successful futures.*

www.graceschools.org.uk | July | 2026



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Welcome from the CEO

Adrian Ball

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first edition of Amazing Grace, celebrating the many achievements and memorable moments from our summer term across Grace Schools.

It has been a wonderful term filled with creativity, opportunity, and success. I was particularly proud to attend our fantastic art exhibition, where the children's talents, imagination, and hard work were celebrated. It was a joy to see their confidence and creativity shine.

I was also delighted to attend the Grace Schools Netball Tournament, where children from across our schools came together to compete with enthusiasm, teamwork, and outstanding sportsmanship. The respect and encouragement shown by all participants truly reflected the values we hold dear.

This has also been an exciting time for Grace Schools as we continue to make excellent progress with the development of our new secondary school. We are delighted to be welcoming our founding Headteacher, Dr Michael Fordham, whose expertise and passion will help shape this exciting new chapter for our community.



As you enjoy this first edition of Amazing Grace, I hope you take pride in celebrating all that our children have achieved this term.

I would like to wish all our children, families, and staff a wonderful summer break. Enjoy time together, make special memories, and return refreshed for another exciting year ahead.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Ball'.

Adrian Ball



Message from the Chair

Helen Jackson



Welcome to the first edition of Amazing Grace, celebrating another successful year across our Trust family.

Our new magazine title reflects our new Trust name, Grace Schools, which will be fully adopted from September. While honouring our roots in the Ely Diocese, the new name will enable us to welcome schools from other dioceses while continuing to reflect our Christian ethos.

We are also delighted to welcome two new Trustees: Lorraine Turner, who's background is in compliance and risk assurance, and Mo Chatra, who is Chief Finance Officer of another MAT. We look forward to introducing them more fully in a future edition.

At the same time, we say farewell to Michael Fordham as a Trustee, while congratulating him on his new role in Grace Schools, as Headteacher of Alconbury Weald Church Academy, our first secondary school, opening in September 2027. In this edition, you can read about the school's progress and Michael's vision for creating a community that embodies the values of a Grace Schools education.

You'll also find more about our new governance structure. Replacing Local Governing Bodies with Regional Schools Boards and Community Councils was a significant decision, driven by recruitment challenges and evolving Ofsted expectations. We are deeply grateful to every governor whose dedication has helped shape the development of our schools up to this point, some of whom have served our schools for decades. We hope many will continue supporting our schools in new ways.



As you read through these pages, we hope you enjoy celebrating the achievements, memorable moments and inspiring stories that have made this year so special. Thank you to everyone who contributes to making our schools such wonderful places to learn and grow.

We wish everyone in the Grace Schools community a happy, restful and well-deserved summer, and we look forward to another exciting year together.

With every blessing,

Helen Jackson

Helen Jackson
Chair of Board of Trustees



Governance Reform Project

Introducing Regional School Boards



Following a review of our governance arrangements, we have established Regional School Boards (RSBs) within our existing hub structure. These boards will provide strategic support across each groups of schools working closely with our hub directors providing an additional level of assurance across the trust.

We are delighted that recruitment to the Regional School Boards has been successful. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the many members of our former Local Governing Bodies who have chosen to continue their governance journey by joining an RSB. Their experience, commitment, and passion for our schools will be invaluable as these new boards begin their work.

Community Councils

Alongside the creation of Regional School Boards, we are also establishing Community Councils in each of our schools. These councils will play a vital role in promoting the Christian ethos of each school, strengthening relationships with parents, local organisations, and the wider community, while championing and celebrating all that makes each school unique.

We are thrilled to report that the very first Community Council meeting, held at St Botolph's, was a resounding success. The enthusiasm, ideas, and commitment demonstrated by those involved highlighted the important role these councils will play in supporting our schools and ensuring they remain at the heart of their communities.

A Heartfelt Thank You

As we move into this new chapter, we want to express our deepest gratitude to every member of our Local Governing Bodies. Your hard work, dedication, and faithful service have made a significant difference to our schools, our staff, and, most importantly, our pupils.

We are especially grateful to those who have chosen to continue serving by joining either a Regional School Board or a Community Council. Your willingness to embrace these new opportunities reflects your ongoing commitment to our shared vision and values.

Get Involved

We are always keen to hear from individuals who share our passion for supporting our schools. If you would like further information about our governance arrangements or are interested in becoming a member of a Regional School Board or joining a Community Council, please contact us by emailing enquiry@graceschools.org.uk.



Grace Schools Rebrand

A fresh new look



The Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust has officially become Grace Schools, marking the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the organisation and the schools within its family.

The new name and refreshed branding are now being introduced across internal and external communications, reflecting the Trust's evolving identity while remaining firmly rooted in its Christian foundations.

Schools continue to provide the same high quality teaching, care and support that families know and value. As Grace Schools continues to grow, the Trust anticipates creating even more opportunities for collaboration between schools and enhanced professional development for staff across the organisation.

As part of the rebrand, every school within the trust has now unveiled its own new logo. Developed to reflect the character of each school and its local community, the refreshed identities celebrate both the individuality of each school and their shared place within the Grace Schools family.

Over the summer, school and trust websites will be refreshed to incorporate the new branding, providing a consistent look and feel across the organisation. The new logos will also continue to be introduced on signage and future uniform orders as part of a phased rollout. Existing uniforms will remain valid, and there is no requirement for parents to purchase new uniforms because of the rebrand, ensuring the transition is practical and cost effective for families.

The move to Grace Schools represents more than a change of name. It reflects a clear vision for the future strengthening the trust's identity while continuing its commitment to helping schools flourish, supporting their communities, and *Creating the foundations to build successful futures.*

Grace
S C H O O L S



*Creating the
foundations to build
successful futures.*





AWCA Update

Exciting Progress at Alconbury Weald Church Academy as New Secondary



There is continued excitement surrounding the development of Alconbury Weald Church Academy (AWCA), with construction of the new secondary school progressing ahead of schedule and on track to welcome its first students in September 2027.

The impressive new campus is taking shape rapidly, marking another significant milestone for Grace Schools within the growing Alconbury Weald community. As work continues, the school is becoming an increasingly prominent feature of the development, reflecting the vision for a modern, high-quality learning environment that will serve local families for generations to come.

Alongside the excellent progress on site, we are delighted to have appointed Dr Michael Fordham as its founding Headteacher. Dr Fordham brings a wealth of experience to the role, having led schools successfully over many years. His proven leadership, passion for education and commitment to delivering an exceptional learning experience will be instrumental in shaping the academy as it prepares to open its doors.

To introduce Dr Fordham to the local community, we recently hosted three well-attended "Meet the Headteacher" events. Prospective parents and students had the opportunity to meet Michael, hear about his vision for the school and ask questions about the academy's curriculum, ethos and plans for its opening.



The events generated great enthusiasm and provided an excellent opportunity for families to begin building relationships with the academy well ahead of the admissions process. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing excitement about the opportunities AWCA will offer.

Recognising the importance of engaging with families throughout the school's journey to opening, AWCA will be hosting more events throughout the coming year. These events will give prospective students and parents further opportunities to get to know Dr Fordham, learn more about the academy and feel confident as the secondary school application window approaches.



With construction progressing ahead of schedule, an experienced Headteacher in place and strong community interest already evident, Alconbury Weald Church Academy is well on its way to becoming an outstanding new secondary school for the area. The academy looks forward to welcoming its first cohort of students in September 2027 and continuing to share updates as this exciting project moves closer to completion.

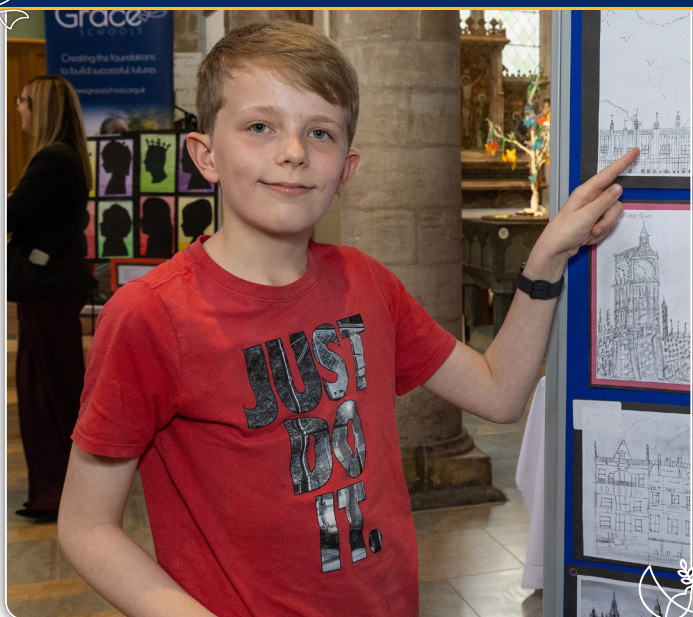
For more information about Alconbury Weald Church Academy please feel free to join our mailing list by emailing enquiries@awc.graceschools.org.uk.

School Build Stays Ahead of Schedule



Art Exhibition

A brush with culture



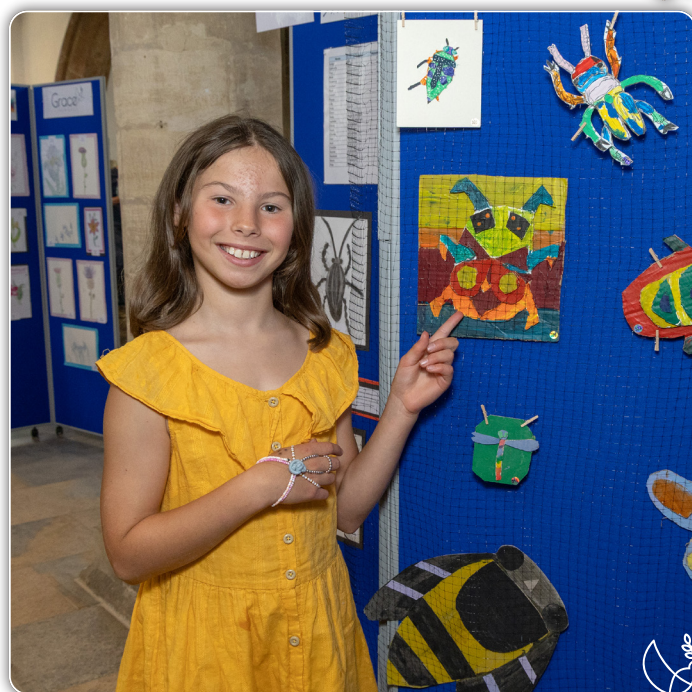
The creativity, talent and hard work of pupils from across Grace Schools took centre stage on 5–6 June, as the trust hosted its very first Art Exhibition under the Grace Schools name at St Mary's Church in Ely.

The two-day event proved to be a huge success, attracting almost 1,000 families, teachers and visitors who came to admire an impressive collection of more than 450 artworks.

The exhibition showcased work created as part of the Primary Knowledge Curriculum, with pupils exploring a wide range of artistic movements, cultures, and historical periods. Featured works were inspired by ancient Greece and Rome, Anglo-Saxon England, the Italian Renaissance, Victorian art and architecture, French Impressionism, and 20th-century Modernism. The collection also reflected the diverse artistic traditions of different religions and cultures, including Islamic art, West African art, and Chinese painting and ceramics.

One of the most memorable aspects of the event was the pride and excitement it inspired among the pupils themselves. Naomi Piling, Curriculum Advisor at PKC, reflected on the atmosphere of the exhibition:

"It was a joy to witness children proudly having their photographs taken alongside their artwork and hear their animated conversations about what they had produced, how they had done it and what they had learnt in the process. It was also clear that it is a way of bringing together a school community, where pupils, parents and teachers can celebrate the fruits of hard work alongside each other." The event was a testament to the dedication of pupils and staff alike, demonstrating the important role that art continues to play in inspiring creativity, cultural understanding, and self-expression.





Grace Schools Netball Tournament

Goals galore!



St Ivo Academy was the setting on Friday 3 July for the first Grace Schools Netball Tournament.

Seven schools came together for a day of exciting competition. Supported by the Hunts School Sports Partnership, the tournament also benefited from the expertise of a talented team of Year 10 Sports Leaders from Hinchingsbrooke School.

Following a series of closely contested rounds, the tournament concluded with an exciting final between Ermine Street and William de Yaxley. They had already played each other in the pool stages of Friday's event. William de Yaxley took a commanding lead, going into half-time 3-0 up. Ermine Street dictated play in the second half, pulling back two goals and were unlucky to not equalise late on, with the match finishing 3-2 and William de Yaxley crowned champions.

The tournament was a celebration of not only sporting excellence but also of enthusiasm, teamwork and participation, with some players experiencing their very first netball competition. Every pupil who took part should be extremely proud of their efforts.

With such a fantastic first tournament now complete, attention turns to the next fixture in the Grace Schools sporting calendar. We look forward to seeing schools come together again for the Grace Schools Football Tournament in September. Roll on the new season!



Our school residentials gradually progress and encourage our children to become more independent – the children go further away from home, don't just stay in one place and take part in more adventurous activities. Our year 4 children have already been to Burwell House where they stayed on site and took part in art, science and history activities.

Last month the children in year 5 travelled to Caythorpe Court near Grantham. They also stay on site for the duration of their visit but take part in a variety of activities to help them gain confidence, try new experiences and push themselves. We have been visiting the PGL Centre for nearly 10 years and it is wonderful to see how much the children grow over the 3 days. There are always plenty of nerves and worries initially but these soon turn to proud smiles and walking a little taller.

The children had some ground based activities including orienteering around the site, archery, a range of problem-solving tasks, laser tag and survivor (where the children built shelters, whittled sticks and tried to start fires). The children went stand up paddle boarding on the lake. Our more adventurous and adrenaline pumping activities included Jacob's ladder (where the rungs get further apart the higher up they go), trapeze (where they climb a wobbly telegraph pole and jump off the top), high ropes (which is like a trim trail 5-10m up in the air) and the giant swing.





William de Yaxley

July 26

Well done to the newly created Orange team who won Sports Day and all of the inter form competitions this year.

This year Mr Hayes decided to make things a bit closer by mixing up the teams and ensuring they were more equal. It has certainly worked as the difference between the first and fifth teams was only 40 points! In previous years it was more like 400.

The netball team also enjoyed sporting success at the inaugural trust netball tournament. We played 4 games in the group stage where we scored 45 goals and only conceded 1. Then on to the semi and final. Mr Hayes said it was the best netball he has seen in the year 10 years he has coached at WDY. Well done to all the team and to Katie Clarke who was picked as the player of the tournament.

Our year 6 children have been out on the roads learning how to ride their bikes safely. This is an important skill to have for later in life and more immediately as they get ready to move on their secondary schools. Thank you to the drivers of Yaxley for taking care around them.





Anthony Curton and Tilney All Saints

Building work has started



Both Anthony Curton and Tilney All Saints are currently having some building works completed which will allow both schools to offer full wraparound provision from September. The breakfast clubs will start from 7.30 in both schools and the after school clubs will run until 5.30pm every day.



At Tilney, the wraparound care building used to be a storage shed, which has been extended and is currently having a toilet and kitchen area installed. The building has been designed specifically for wraparound care, so it will be an ideal space for children to socialise before school or relax after a hard day's learning. We have plans to offer a sporting option or a more sedate art/craft based option to the children each day. We have never been able to offer wraparound provision at Tilney before, so we are very excited to give our families this option.



At Anthony Curton, the old mobile building is currently being demolished, ready for a new, slightly larger building to replace it. Wraparound care at Anthony Curton has been available for a long time and is always well used by the families in the locality. The old mobile was becoming unsustainable due to the cost of repairs that were being undertaken on a monthly basis. The new building will offer a beautiful space for the wraparound care to continue welcoming children before and after school so they can have fun with their friends. We are hoping to offer hot food to the children once the new building is in place, meaning that our children will have full bellies while they enjoy playing and engaging with peers.

Both of these projects have only been possible due to Government funding for wraparound care, which was sought through Norfolk County Council. Both schools were successful in applying for funding from Norfolk, which has allowed us to enhance our schools and the provision that we offer.



In the future, it is hoped that we will be able to use the wraparound care spaces in both schools for "Stay and Play" sessions with younger children, and in time, maybe even offer pre-school provision. This will help to really set apart our schools from the other local schools as there are very limited pre-schools/nursery spaces in the local area. Hopefully this funding will really help to draw more children into the Grace Schools family and support the longevity of both of our schools.



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