



Whinstone Weekly

Academic Year 2026/2027 - Autumn term

Friday 4th September 2026

Whinstone Wide - General school information



Welcome back to a new year at Whinstone Primary. I hope you all had a lovely summer. The weather this year was even better than last, it truly felt like a summer! It is great to see the children back with us - they all look so smart in their new uniform. The week has been calm and the children have settled back well - a positive start to the new academic year!

I would like to extend an especially warm welcome to all of the new children who have joined Whinstone. In addition to our pre-school starters, we have also welcomed a number of older children to the school, with twelve new children joining us on Thursday. We are delighted to have them as part of the Whinstone family and hope they will quickly settle in and feel at home.

Ofsted

Following our Ofsted inspection during the final week of the summer term, we are currently waiting for the inspection report to be published. As soon as it becomes available, we will let you know. The report will also be published on the Ofsted website, where all inspection reports can be viewed.

As shared previously, Ofsted has introduced a completely new inspection framework, under which our school was inspected. This includes changes to the grading system, with inspection outcomes now presented in the form of a report card.

Ofsted has produced a short, three-minute video explaining the changes to the inspection framework and the new grading system. You can access the video here: [Ofsted summary video](#).

Although we are pleased that the inspection is now over, we appreciate that waiting for the final report can be difficult! We will share the report and any relevant information with you as soon as it becomes available.



Flu Vaccinations - Friday 2nd October 2026

The School Aged Immunisation Team will be visiting Whinstone on Friday 2nd October 2026 to administer the annual flu vaccination.

The flu vaccination is available to all children from Reception (FS2) through to Year 6. The Immunisation Team will see all pupils whose parents or carers have completed a valid consent form.

You will receive a text message from the NHS inviting you to complete the online consent form. If you have not received a text message two weeks before the vaccination session, please contact the Immunisation Team on 0333 358 3397, option 3 and then option 3, so that they can provide you with a consent form. These vaccinations are not managed by school, you will need to communicate directly with the Immunisation Team.

Mobile Phones and Smart Technology in School

As you may be aware, the Department for Education has introduced statutory guidance on the use of mobile phones in schools. From 1 September 2026, schools in England are expected to have arrangements in place to ensure that pupils do not have access to mobile phones during the school day. This includes lessons, breaktimes, lunchtimes and the periods between lessons. The guidance also covers other smart technology with similar communication, notification or recording functions.

At Whinstone, we are committed to providing a calm, safe and distraction-free environment in which children can focus on their learning. Our updated Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will reflect these requirements.

We recognise that some parents and carers may wish their older children, particularly those who walk to and from school independently, to carry a mobile phone for safety reasons. If your child needs to bring a mobile phone to school, the following arrangements will apply:

- The phone must be **switched off before entering the school gates**.
- On arrival, the phone must be **handed to the class teacher for safekeeping**.
- Phones will be securely stored during the school day and **returned at the end of the school day**.
- The phone must remain switched off until the child has **left the school premises**.



In addition, children should not bring smartwatches or other personal smart technology into school. This includes devices such as Apple Watches, Fitbits, smart glasses, AirPods and similar devices that can send or receive notifications, messages, calls or record audio or video.

If a child brings one of these devices into school, they will be asked to hand it to a member of staff and it will be returned at the end of the school day.

If a child brings a prohibited device into school for a second time, the device will be removed and kept securely in the school office until it can be collected by a parent or other responsible adult.

We appreciate your support in helping us to maintain a mobile phone- and smart technology-free school day. These measures are designed to reduce distractions, support positive behaviour and wellbeing, and ensure that children can fully focus on their learning and on developing positive relationships with one another.

There may be specific exceptions where a child needs access to a device because of a medical condition, disability, special educational need or other individual circumstance. Where this applies, we will work with families to agree appropriate arrangements in line with the statutory guidance.

Fidgets in School

Last year, we saw a significant increase in the number of children bringing and using fidget toys in school. While fidgets can be a valuable tool for some children, for the majority they are not necessary.

The purpose of a fidget is to help an individual regulate their sensory system so that they can focus and engage with the task at hand. They can also be helpful during moments of frustration, anxiety or sensory overload, providing a way to redirect and calm overwhelming emotions.

However, the wide range of commercially available fidgets has changed considerably, with many now designed to be particularly colourful, engaging and entertaining. As a result, they can often become more of a distraction than a support for concentration and regulation.

As a school, we are aware of the children who benefit from having a fidget to support their focus and concentration. Where a child has a specific need, this will usually be identified within their individual support plan.

We have therefore decided that children should not bring fidget toys into school from home. If your child genuinely benefits from using a fidget, one will be provided by school.

We have a wide range of fidgets available to meet the different sensory and regulation needs of our children. This means that children who need this type of support will have access to an appropriate resource, while helping to minimise unnecessary distractions in the classroom.

Year 6 secondary school open evenings

Although we have just started the new school year, some of our children will soon have to think about their options for secondary schools for next year. Open evenings provide an opportunity for both parents and our current Y6 children to explore the school and meet the staff.

A full list of the dates are available on the Stockton-on-Tees website ([link here](#)) or on the back page of this newsletter, but the ones most of our children attend are shown below. If your child is currently in Year 6, make a note of these dates.

All Saints Church of England Academy	Thursday 8 th October 5pm – 7pm
Thornaby Academy	Tuesday 22 nd September 5pm – 7pm
Conyers	Wednesday 23 rd September 5:30pm
Egglescliffe	Thursday 24 th September 5:30pm – 8pm
St. Patrick's	Tuesday 29 th September 5pm – 7pm
Ingleby Manor Free School	Thursday 1 st October 5pm – 7pm

Uniform

As we start the new year, can I please ask that you **name all jumpers, coats and hoodies** so they can be returned to your child if found around the school building and grounds. These items are ones that the children take off when they get too warm and just forget to pick back up again. Already I have multiple black PE hoodies and blue jumpers/cardigans - all very new - all unnamed. Naming uniform does not have to involve any sewing or fancy printed labels - a name written on the label in a biro is absolutely fine. All we ask is that you check it regularly to ensure it is still visible. With the current cost-of-living crisis, it would be so annoying if you have purchased lovely school uniform only for it to be lost within days. Losses are minimised by naming the uniform, so please don't forget.

Breakfast Club bookings:

Breakfast Club runs every morning from and 7:45am. We understand the importance of affordable wraparound care and remain committed to providing a welcoming, supportive start to the school day. The cost of this, which includes breakfast, is £5.

We ask that Breakfast Club is booked in advance to ensure we have the correct number of staff. Breakfast Club is available to book via the Arbor app.

Harvest Festival

Throughout this half term, we will be collecting tinned and dried food items to support Thornaby Food Bank. Donations of toiletries and hygiene products are also very much appreciated. Please send any donations into school to be handed to your child's class teacher.

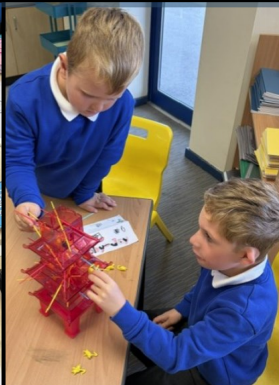
Through our Harvest celebrations, the children will be learning about what it means to be a good citizen, including the importance of looking out for and supporting those in need within our local community.

On Monday 19th October, Reverend Liz from St Francis' Church will lead a special Harvest Festival assembly for children in Key Stages 1 and 2. This will be a lovely opportunity for us to come together as a school community and celebrate the importance of kindness, generosity and helping others.

Around Whinstone this week.



The children have spent the first two days getting to know their new teachers, settling into their new routines and beginning to build those important relationships. Next week, we will begin to introduce more formalised learning, as the children become increasingly settled and ready for the year ahead.



Whinstone next week

Active Future Teesside

Active Future Teesside will be hosting assemblies to promote their sports clubs. Sports Clubs are available to book through your Arbor app.

Singing assembly

On Friday, Bethel, the peripatetic singing teacher, and some of her singers will be showing their talents to children in Year 3 and Year 4.

Developing Oracy at Whinstone Primary School

We are continuing to improve our oracy skills throughout the school. Last year we posed a weekly 'Would You Rather'. This year we will be introducing **Talk About It!**

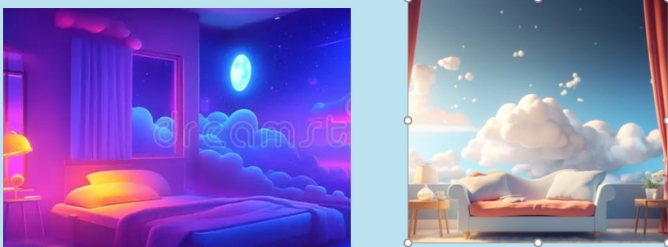
Each week, we will share a thought-provoking question for families to explore together at home. These conversations provide a simple and enjoyable way to develop children's **oracy, confidence and communication skills**. There are no right or wrong answers — we encourage children to share their ideas, explain their thinking, listen carefully to others and respond respectfully. Why not make time for a few minutes of family discussion over dinner, on a journey or at bedtime?

Talk about it



Oracy - talk matters!
This week's topic to discuss with your child.

Imagine...
You wake up and your bedroom is floating in the sky.
What happens next?
What can you see?



Talk About It



Online safety



Online Safety Guide for Parents and Carers

We are always looking for useful resources to help parents and carers support their children in staying safe online. We have recently come across an up-to-date and very informative guide to online safety, created by a Computing specialist who regularly shares fantastic resources for schools and families.

The guide covers a wide range of important topics, including a helpful section on mobile phones, which is particularly relevant as we introduce our updated approach to mobile phones and smart technology in school from September 2026.

We have been given permission to share the guide with our families and think it is a really useful resource for parents and carers. We have added it to our school website ([link here](#)) where you can access it alongside our other online safety information.

We would encourage all parents and carers to have a look when you have a few minutes - it's a great resource!

Safeguarding and Family Support



Daisy Chain Peer Support Coffee Mornings are back next week!

From 7th September until October Half Term, Daisy Chain will be at Billingham Family Hub every Monday from 10am to 12pm.

Why not pop along to:

- *Get help and advice
- *Meet other parents and carers
- *Build a support network for your family

A Daisy Chain Family Support Leader will be there to offer support in a friendly and welcoming space.

Refreshments available.

No booking needed.

PEER SUPPORT COFFEE MORNINGS STOCKTON-ON-TEES

From the 7th September 2026 - we will be at the Billingham Family Hub, Ochill Terrace, TS23 2QL every Monday.

From the 2nd November 2026 - we will be at the Stockton Family Hub, Yarm Road, TS18 3PJ every Monday.

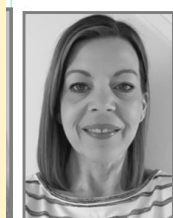


Full details attached to the back of this newsletter.

Safeguarding :

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the school is **Mrs Batty**.

Our other safeguarding leads in school are:



Mrs Wilson- Dukes



Mr Carlton



Mrs Squires



Mr Ford



If you are worried about a child, please contact school or the Stockton Family Help Point using [this link](#).

During working hours call: 01642 130080 or Email: familyhelppoint@stockton.gov.uk

In an emergency, please contact the Police on **101** or **999**.

Attendance

We are aiming for fantastic attendance this year but have not got off to a great start! Attendance is so important, please try to ensure your child attends regularly.

Whole school attendance
(year to date)

93.8%

National average = 94.1%



Miss Owens, our PSA, is available to support and help with any issues you have regarding attendance or to support around other concerns you have affecting your family. Contact the school if you would like to speak with her.

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Do you live within the Stockton-on-Tees Local Authority?

Do you have concerns that your child, who is 0-18 years of age, is Autistic, has ADHD, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) or Sensory Processing Differences?

Peer support coffee mornings are designed so parents/carers can build support network in a safe and non-judgemental space.

A Daisy Chain family support leader will be available to provide advice and support for you, your child and your family.

For further details please join our Facebook group or contact the team directly.



UPCOMING 2026 DATES:

TERM TIME ONLY

EVERY MONDAY 10AM-12PM

Please feel free to bring a friend or family member along with you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

family.support@wearedaisychain.org

01642 531248 (option 1)

NO BOOKING REQUIRED / REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE



Calling Year 5 and Year 6 children, parents and carers!
Exploring Stockton-on-Tees Secondary Schools' Open Evenings.

Choosing a secondary school is an exciting milestone. Open evenings provide a valuable opportunity for you and your child to explore different schools, meet staff and students, and discover what each setting can offer.

Secondary School	Date	Time
St Michael's Catholic Academy. Beamish Road, Billingham, TS23 3DX	Tuesday, 08/09/2026	5pm-7pm
Outwood Bishopsgarth Academy, Harrowgate Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 8TF	Tuesday, 15/09/26	4.30pm-6.30pm
Ian Ramsey Church of England Academy, Fairfield Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 7AJ	Thursday, 17/09/2026	4.30pm-7pm
Northfield School, Thames Road, Billingham, TS22 5EG	Monday, 21/09/2026	6pm
Thornaby Academy, Baysdale Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 9DB	Tuesday, 22/09/26	5pm-7pm
The Grangefield Academy, Oxbridge Avenue, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 4LE	Wednesday, 23/09/26	4pm-6pm
Conyers School, Green Lane, Yarm, TS15 9ET	Wednesday, 23/09/26	5.30pm
Egglescliffe school, 7 Seymour Grove, Eaglescliffe, TS16 0LA	Thursday, 24/09/2026	5.30pm-8pm
Our Lady & St Bede Academy, Bishopton Road West, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 0QH	Thursday, 24/09/2026	3.30pm-5.30pm
St Patrick's Catholic College, Baysdale Road, Thornaby, TS17 9DE	Tuesday, 29/09/2026	5pm-7pm
North Shore Academy, Talbot Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS20 2AY	Tuesday, 29/09/2026	4.30pm-7pm
Ingleby Manor Free School, Welwyn Road, Ingleby Barwick, TS17 0FA	Thursday, 01/10/2026	5pm-7pm
All Saints Church of England Academy, 10 Myton Road, Ingleby Barwick, TS17 0WA	Thursday, 08/10/2026	5pm-7pm