



Whinstone Weekly

Academic Year 2026/2027 - Autumn term

Friday 2nd October 2026

Whinstone Wide - General school information

Christmas card orders

It seems far too early to be talking about the 'C' word when it is only the start of October!

However, over the next few days, your child will bring home a sample of a Christmas card design they have created themselves.

If you would like to order cards featuring your child's design, orders can be placed online directly with Class Fundraising, the company producing the cards. There are also a range of other items and gifts available featuring their design, including mugs, soft toys, baubles and wrapping paper — perfect for a very personal

**Class
Fundraising**

Christmas gift!



The deadline for orders is midday on Tuesday 20th October. This may seem like an early deadline, but it is essential to allow enough time for the cards and gifts to be produced and delivered in time for the festive season.

Eligibility for Free School Meals

From September, the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals (FSM) changed. If your family receives Universal Credit, your child may now be eligible for a free school meal.



Previously, eligibility was linked to household earnings of under £7,400 per year. This earnings threshold no longer applies, meaning more families may now be eligible.

We understand that some families may have concerns about a stigma associated with receiving Free School Meals. However, there is no need to worry about this in school. All meal payments are made through Arbor, so there is no difference in how pupils access their meals, and other pupils and staff would not know whether a child is receiving a Free School Meal or having a paid meal.

If you think your child may be eligible, we would encourage you to check and apply. You can find further information and complete an application via the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council website using the link: [Apply for free school meals - Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council](#)

World Mental Health Day - wear bright colours.

World Mental Health Day takes place on Saturday 10 October. As a school, we have always placed a strong emphasis on supporting and promoting children's mental health and wellbeing. We have a team of Mental Health Champions and regularly run activities to raise awareness and encourage positive conversations about mental health.

To recognise World Mental Health Day and show our support for positive mental health and wellbeing across our school community, we are inviting children to wear bright, cheerful colours to school on Friday 9th October.

We hope that seeing a sea of bright colours around school will help us to spread a little positivity and remind everyone of the importance of looking after our mental health and supporting one another.



Plastic milk bottle plea

Our Reception classes are working on an activity next week requiring plastic milk bottles of any size. If you have any empty plastic milk bottles at home, we would be grateful if you could send them into school. These can be handed to your child's class teacher, who will make sure they reach our Reception children.

Can we ask that all bottles are thoroughly rinsed and cleaned before sending them into school.



No-nut reminder

This is a reminder to all families that, as a school, we operate a no-nut policy. Please ensure that your child does not bring any food containing nuts into school, either in packed lunches or as snacks.

This includes products that can be easy to overlook — particularly Nutella, which contains hazelnuts despite being a popular chocolate spread.

There have been recent developments in how schools manage allergies and anaphylaxis, including the introduction of Benedict's Law. However, Whinstone has always operated a no-nut policy to help keep our pupils safe.

We therefore ask all families to please check the ingredients of packed lunches and snacks carefully and ensure that no nut-containing products are brought into school.

Lunch time supervisor vacancy

Mrs Manning, one of our Lunchtime supervisors, is retiring at half term after 29 years at Whinstone. This means we are currently looking for a Lunchtime Supervisory Assistant to join our team.

If you are interested in applying for this role, please see the candidate pack on the Trust website ([link here](#)) which contains all the information you need to apply.

The closing date for applications is 12pm on Friday 16th October and interviews will be held in school on Wednesday 21st October.



Around Whinstone this week.

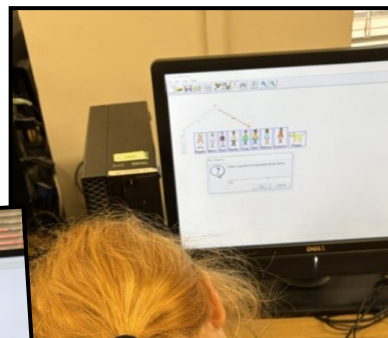


Well done to those who earned a Headteacher's certificate from Mrs Batty this week.

Our Reception classes have been learning about democracy and making choices. They have been voting on different things this week.



Year 2 have set up a weather station in school to collect data for their geography topic.



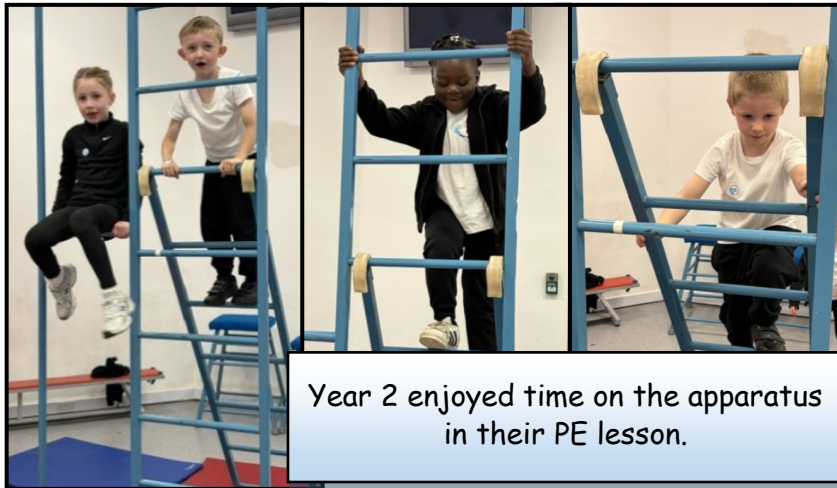
Year 3 have been making branching databases in their computing lessons.



There was fruit tasting and voting for the favourite fruit in Reception this week.



Dough Disco fun in Year 1.



Year 2 enjoyed time on the apparatus in their PE lesson.



Year 6 did an activity in their geography lesson to discuss and decide how water should be shared during a drought.



Lunchtime fun with OPAL.



Whinstone Stars

Isaiah attends a sports club where he takes part in a variety of sports. Over the summer he has achieved numerous medals to reflect his fantastic participation in different sports.

Wow, what a super achievement - well done, Isaiah!

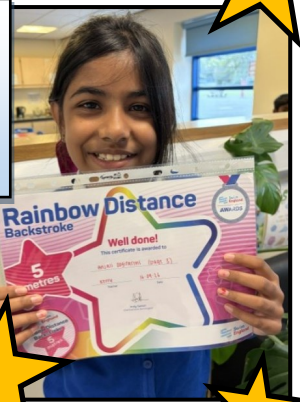




Evie attends Cheer and Gymnastics at Middlesbrough College.
She has been awarded a medal for performing on the stage in a routine with her group.
Great work - well done, Evie.



Anjali attends swimming lessons. She has recently achieved her 5m backstroke award.
Wow - well done, Anjali.



Eve has been working hard at her swimming lessons especially her awareness of water safety.
Fantastic - well done, Eve.



Whinstone next week

Youth Focus action group

On Thursday, a group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils will be having a session as part of the Youth Focus Action Group scheme.

World Mental Health Day - wear something bright.

On Friday, we are recognising World Mental Health Day. We are asking children to come to school in bright and cheerful clothing.

Talk about it



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

Talk About It



Imagine your teddy starts talking one day.



What does it say?
Could it get you into trouble?



Could it help you in anyway?

Safeguarding and Family Support



Quit this Stoptober

If you're thinking about quitting smoking this Stoptober, the right support can make all the difference. There are now more ways to quit in Stockton-on-Tees than ever before, with free, local support to help you find what works best for you.

Choose from the free [Stockton Specialist Stop Smoking Service](#), quit aids and medications to ease cravings, and the free [Smoke Free app](#) providing 24/7 support on your phone.

Your body starts to recover from the day you stop smoking. You could breathe easier, feel healthier and save money sooner than you think. It doesn't matter how many times you've tried before. Every quit attempt is a step closer to success.

Find confidence, find support and find your way to quit at [FreshQuit.co.uk](https://www.freshquit.co.uk).

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 have achieved it this week - we are above National average again. Thank you for all your efforts to keep your child in school. The results show the improvement.

Whole school attendance
(year to date)



95.8%

National average = 95.6%



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.

Be on Time... Every Time!



Good punctuality helps your child get the most out of their school day.



✓ Builds confidence

Arriving on time helps children feel calm, settled and ready to learn.



✓ More learning

They don't miss important lessons or key instructions.



✓ Good friendships

They can join in with their class, keep up with their friends and feel included.



✓ Better progress

Small steps each day make a big difference over time.



✓ Less stress

A good routine makes mornings easier for everyone.



✓ Futures matter

Good habits now help build brighter opportunities later in life.

On time
for today...
ready for
tomorrow!
— ♥ —

Every minute counts!

Thank you for supporting
your child's attendance and punctuality.

Happy
Children
Learn
Better!
♥

