Whinstone Weekly

Academic Year 2026/2027 - Autumn term

Friday 13th November 2026

Whinstone Wide - General school information

Christmas dinner and Christmas jumper day



On Wednesday 9th December, Whinstone will be having our annual Christmas dinner alongside our planned Christmas jumper day. We would love for every child from Reception to Year 6 to have the opportunity to enjoy a festive school dinner, including those who would usually bring a packed lunch from home.

The meal choices available on the day will be: Roast chicken or vegetarian Quorn fillet with all the festive trimmings, jacket potato with a choice of fillings or sandwiches.

If your child normally has a packed lunch and you would like them to enjoy a Christmas dinner, all you need to do is complete a short online form (**link here**) to let us know this and also to select their preferred meal option. **This must be completed by Friday 27th November** to allow our catering team to plan for the additional numbers and ensure that sufficient food can be ordered in advance.

You will receive an invoice via Arbor on the afternoon of Wednesday 9th December for £3.15, unless your child is eligible for free school meals.

Children who usually have a school dinner will be able to select their Christmas dinner choice through their usual meal selection process and do not need to complete the online form.

NHS Charity Christmas chocolate and festive treat donation



Our Mental Health Champions are delighted to take a leading role in promoting and supporting the Christmas NHS Fundraiser this year organised by Linthorpe Beds. This is a fantastic opportunity for our school to demonstrate kindness, compassion and community spirit, particularly during the festive season. We are asking for any donations of chocolate or festive treats - they just need to be unopened, new items. All donations will be collected and distributed to patients spending Christmas time in our local hospitals. Please bring any sweet treats you would like to give to Mrs Burey or Mrs Gibson by Friday 4th December. Help us to help our Mental Health Champions spread some festive cheer.



Christmas Fayre - Friday 27th November

Just a reminder that our Christmas Fayre will take place on Friday 27th November straight after school from 3:15 to 5:15pm. We are still after donations of anything in bottles for our popular bottle stall and donations for the Christmas hampers. If you have any items you can contribute, please send in with your child to hand to their class teacher.

Please remember, that although some of the stall holders may have the capacity to take card payments, the majority of stalls and all school based activities, are cash only.

Anti-bullying week



Next week is Anti-Bullying week. This year's theme is 'Break the Silence'. Our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors with support from the Mental Health Champions, are organising a variety of events over the course of the week. The first of which takes place on Monday and is 'Odd socks day' where children can wear odd socks to celebrate individuality. A full break down of Whinstone's planned activities and events for Anti-Bullying week is shown below:



World Prematurity Day

Whinstone is proud to be a Prem Aware School, and each year we show our support by recognising World Prematurity Day.

This year, World Prematurity Day falls on Sunday 15th November. It is a global day dedicated to raising awareness of the challenges and impact of premature birth. It shines a spotlight on the importance of improving care for babies born too soon, while also recognising the practical and emotional support needed by their families.

At Whinstone, we have a number of children who were born prematurely themselves, and also children who have siblings that were premature. We therefore know that this is something that touches the lives of many of our families.

To help raise awareness and show our support, on Monday 16th November, alongside wearing odd socks, we are inviting children to wear something purple! Children should come to school in their usual uniform but can swap an item of clothing for a purple alternative. This could be a purple T-shirt instead of their usual white one, a purple jumper or hoodie, or even purple shoes if they have them.

Please don't feel that you need to buy anything especially for the occasion. Even the smallest splash of purple will show your support – whether that's a headband, a hair accessory or even a little purple pen spot on the hand. Every little splash of purple helps us raise awareness and show our solidarity with families affected by premature birth.

School trips

At Whinstone, we are passionate about providing children with opportunities to learn, explore and experience things beyond the classroom, and we firmly believe that educational visits play an important part in enriching children's learning. However, these visits can only go ahead when sufficient contributions have been received to cover the costs involved. This week, we had to make the sad decision to cancel a planned school trip due to insufficient contributions being received. Because unfortunately, school is not in a financial position to cover any significant shortfall.

We feel it is important to explain how school trips are funded. School trips are not a source of income for school, and we cannot make a profit from them. The contribution requested from each family is calculated to cover the actual cost of providing the experience for each child. We are also unable to ask for more from families to compensate for those who are unable to pay. The cost per child is exactly what the trip costs. Likewise, if we are providing an educational experience to enhance academic learning, we cannot exclude any child regardless of whether a contribution has been received or not.



We must make decisions in sufficient time to avoid cancellation charges from transport providers and venues. In most cases, this means confirming whether a trip can proceed approximately one to two weeks before the planned date, although timescales can vary depending on individual providers. This is why payment deadlines are set. If sufficient contributions have not been received by the deadline, we may unfortunately have no alternative but to cancel.

We fully appreciate that the ongoing cost-of-living pressures continue to affect families, and we recognise that contributions towards school trips are voluntary. However, schools also have financial limitations and responsibilities, and we simply do not have the additional funds available to cover significant shortfalls. For some experiences such as residentials and non-curricular experiences, parents have a choice as to whether their child attends and they pay accordingly. However, for trips to enhance the taught curriculum this is not an option - all children should attend.

We will continue to do everything we can to plan visits as early as possible, giving families as much notice as we can and allowing more time for contributions to be saved and paid. We also endeavour to select experiences that are as affordable as possible. However, the rising cost of everything at the moment, especially transport, continues to have an impact on the overall cost of organising school visits.

We remain committed to providing children with memorable and enriching experiences beyond the classroom, and we genuinely value the support and contributions that families make towards making these opportunities possible. We hope that, by explaining the financial considerations involved, families can understand why sufficient contributions are so important in enabling these visits to go ahead.

Considerate parking reminder

We appreciate that this issue seems to feature regularly in our newsletter, but once again we feel it is important to remind everyone about the need for considerate and safe parking around school.



This week, a parent shared a photograph with us during the morning drop off, showing a vehicle parked in a way that completely blocked the footpath. This meant that pedestrians with pushchairs or mobility needs would have needed to step out into the road to get past.

As a school, we do not have the authority to enforce parking restrictions or take action against inconsiderate parking. However, we can ask everyone to be mindful of where and how they park, and to think about the impact their choices may have on others. Before leaving your vehicle, please take a moment to consider: Is where I have parked considerate to others? Is it safe for pedestrians and, most importantly, our children? We all have a responsibility to help keep the areas around school safe. Nobody wants their parking to put a child or another pedestrian at risk, so please help us by being considerate and thinking before you park.

Year 6 Carlton residential reminder

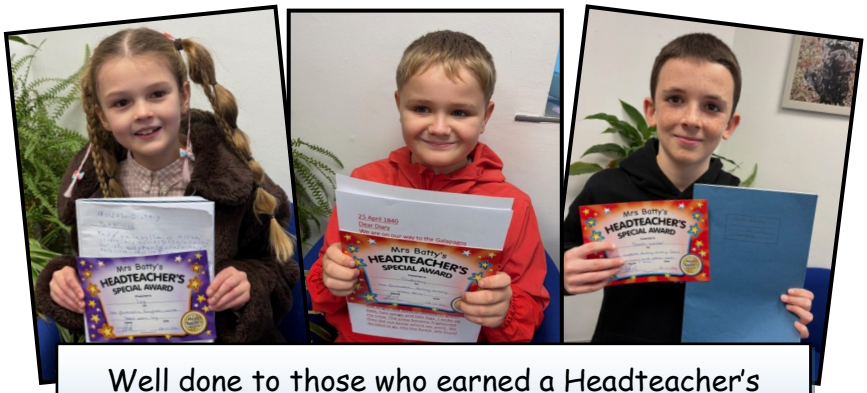
We are pleased to confirm that we have secured a booking for our Year 6 children to attend Carlton Outdoor Education Centre from Monday 14th June to Friday 18th June 2027.

A letter containing further information about the residential was sent to all Year 6 parents and carers via Arbor. This is a residential visit that Whinstone has proudly offered for many years and has consistently proved to be a fantastic and memorable experience for the children.

If you have a child in Year 6 and have not yet done so, please take a moment to complete the online form (link here) to let us know whether your child is interested in attending or whether they will not be taking part.

Please ensure the form is completed by Monday 16th November. There are now just a couple of days left to submit your response, so we would really appreciate you taking the time to do this.

Around Whinstone this week.



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





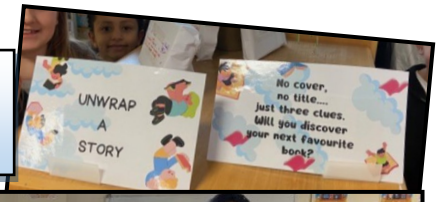


The Reception classes had their PE session where they were developing their motor skills by having to control a ball.



Our Early Years children and families attended a bedtime read event. It was lovely to see so many people attend.

The Reading Ambassadors set up their 'wrapped book' challenge.





There was some fantastic artwork produced by our Year 3 children.







Year 6 had their Forest school session.



Our Year 6 Youth Focus group went to a local Residential Home and supported the residents in participating in some activities they had organised.









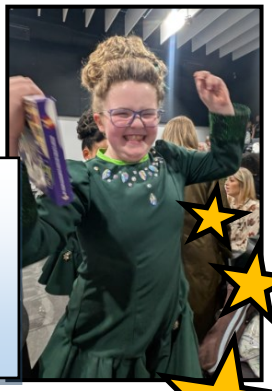


Remembrance Day assembly and activities.





Whinstone Stars



Addie took part in the North East Regional Councils Oireachtas, the annual regional championship for Irish dancing. Her team qualified for the World Irish Dancing Championships.
Wow - this is amazing, Addie. Well done.



Cole plays football for TIBS. In his match against Norton, Cole was awarded the 'Man of the match' trophy.
Well done, Cole,



Zelda and Cora performed in their winter dance show. They danced to songs about friendship and were superb.
Wow, girl, you are so brave and confident. Keep it up.



Owen has been continuing with his success in karate. He competed and won a gold medal in Kata and a silver in Kumite (combat).
Well done, Owen - this is a fantastic achievement.

Whinstone next week

Odd socks day and Anti-Bullying week.

On Monday, we are kick starting our Anti-Bullying week with an odd socks day. Children are asked to come to school wearing odd socks. Bright and colourful socks welcomed!

Wear something purple for World Prematurity Day

On Monday, alongside odd socks, please try and wear something purple. Wear your usual uniform for the day just switch out something for a purple item or wear a small token of purple such as hairband or purple pen dot on the hand.

KS2 poetry event

On Wednesday, our KS2 children will be taking part in an online poetry event.

Year 6 Forest School

On Wednesday afternoon, Year 6 will be having a Forest School session.

Year 4 TTRS Rockstars day

On Thursday, Year 4 are having a TTRS Rockstars day.

Year 5 trip to Kirkleatham Hall

On Thursday, our Year 5 children are going on a trip to Kirkleatham Hall.

Reception road crossing session

On Thursday, our Reception children will be having a road awareness session.

Matt Vickers (MP) visiting school to introduce our Parliament week

On Friday, Matt Vickers will visit the school to introduce our Parliament week.

Talk about it



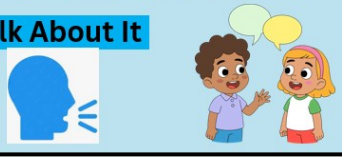


Oracy - talk matters!

This week's topic to discuss with your child.

You can talk to animals for one day. Which animals would you talk to? Which would tell the best jokes?





Safeguarding and Family Support

Diverse Paths Parent and Carer Forum

We are delighted to tell you that we are hosting a 'Parent and Carer Forum', in partnership with the 'Stockton Parent Carer Forum'.

Date: Wednesday 2nd December
Time: 2:15pm - 3:15pm
Location: Whinstone Primary School



This session is open to all parents and carers, whether your child has identified Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or not. The forum aims to bring families together to share information, access support, and help shape the services available to children and families within our school.

During the session, parents and carers will have the opportunity to learn about the range of support, services, activities, and organisations available within the local community.

Whether you are looking for advice, would like to connect with other families, or simply want to find out more about support available in Stockton, we would love to welcome you.

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

This is the third week that there has been a decline in attendance. Hopefully next week will see us start to rise.

Whole school attendance
(year to date)

95.7%

National average = 95.4%

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.

Whinstone Calendar 26-27
Parent version

October	
Friday 16th	Wear Red – Show Racism the Red Card
Wednesday 21st	School Halloween discos
Wednesday 21st	Tempest school photos
Thursday 22nd	PD Day
Friday 23rd	PD Day
November	
Wednesday 11th	School open evening for parents Y1-Y6 (15:30-18:00) Drop-in not appointments Bedtime read for EYFS then drop-ins from 16:45
Friday 13th	Children in Need – non-uniform + donation for CIN
Monday 16th	Wear something purple for World Prematurity Day Odd socks day (for Anti-bullying week)
W/C Monday 16th	Anti-bullying week
W/C Monday 16th	Pre-school new starter home visits
Thursday 19th	Year 4 England Rocks TTRS event – dressing up (YEAR 4 ONLY)
Wednesday 25th	SEND parents' evening (15:30-17:30) 20-minute appointments booked through Arbor
Friday 27th	Christmas fayre (15:15 – 17:30)
December	
Wednesday 2nd	Pre-school new starter stay and play (15:45 – 16:45)
Wednesday 2nd	Y1 Christmas performance
Thursday 3rd	Reception Christmas performance
Monday 7th	Y6 Christmas performance
Tuesday 8th	Y5 Christmas performance
Wednesday 9th	Pre-School Christmas crafts (morning)
Wednesday 9th	Christmas jumper day and school Christmas dinner
Wednesday 9th	Y4 Christmas performance
Thursday 10th	Visit to panto at Yarm (Rec-Y6) all morning
Friday 11th	Y3 Christmas performance (Christingle at church – morning 10:30 start)
Friday 11th	Y2 Christmas performance (14:30)
Monday 14th	Year 3 and Year 4 parties
Tuesday 15th	Year 5 and Year 6 parties
Wednesday 16th	Pre-school and reception parties
Thursday 17th	Year 1 and Year 2 parties
Friday 18th	Break up for Christmas holidays
January	
Monday 4th	PD day
February	
W/C Monday 1st	Children's Mental Health Week – Theme = Step into our World
Tuesday 2nd	Year 2 trip – Centre for Life
Tuesday 9th	Safer internet day. Theme = Reflect on Tech
Wednesday 10th	School discos (TBC)
Friday 12th	Reports out to parents
Friday 12th	Break up for half term

Wednesday 24th	SEND parents' evening (15:30-17:30) 20-minute appointments booked through Arbor
March	
Tuesday 2nd	Parents' evening 1 – appointments via Arbor (15:30 – 17:30)
Wednesday 3rd	Parents' evening 2 – appointments via Arbor (15:30 – 18:00)
Mon 22nd – Wed 24th	Y4 residential to Robin Wood
Thursday 25th	Break up for Easter holidays
April	
May	
Monday 3rd	Bank holiday – no school
Tuesday 4th	Tempest to do Reception and Y6 class photos
W/C Monday 10th	SATs week
Friday 28th	Break up for half term
June	
W/C Monday 7th	Y4 Multiplication check Phonics Screening check
Tuesday 8th	School council trip to Parliament
Wednesday 9th	SEND parents' evening (15:30-17:30) 20-minute appointments booked through Arbor
W/C Monday 14th	Phonics screening check week
W/C Monday 14th	Year 6 at Carlton
Monday 21st	Year 1/2 sports day (13:45 onwards)
Tuesday 22nd	Year 5/6 sports day (13:45 onwards)
Wednesday 23rd	Pre-school sports' day
Thursday 24th	Year 3/4 sports day (13:45 onwards)
Friday 25th	Reception sports' day (13:45 onwards)
Wednesday 30th – Thursday 1st June	Y5 overnight residential - Beamish
July	
Tuesday 6th	Reports out (in line with KS2 SAT results being published)
Wednesday 14th	Parents' evening (15:30-17:30) for any parent who requests one.
Monday 19th	Year 6 leavers disco (evening)
Tuesday 20th	Year 6 leavers' assembly 09:10-10:10
Wednesday 21st	Break up for summer holidays