



GAINFORD C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER

MARCH / APRIL 2026

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Together we love, learn & flourish

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **Friday 6th – 15th March** – British Science Week
- **Wednesday 18th March** – Reception Vision Screening
- **Friday 20th March** – Red Nose Day
- **Monday 23rd March** - Y5/Y6 Multi-skills Festival @ Staindrop Academy
- **Tuesday 24th March** – Parents Evening
- **Wednesday 25th March** – Y1/2 Football Competition @ Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre
- **Friday 27th March** – Reception & KS1 Auckland Castle Trip
- **Monday 30th March** – Y3/4 Orienteering Festival @ Staindrop Academy
- **Tuesday 31st March** – Parents Evening (SEND pupils)
- **Wednesday 1st April** – Easter Service & Decorated Egg Competition
- **Thursday 2nd April** - Last Day of Term

WORLD BOOK DAY

Our pupils and staff had a fantastic time celebrating World Book Day! It was wonderful to see so many creative costumes and the children all looked amazing. Thank you to families for the effort you put into helping make the day so special. If you would like to see more photos from the day, please visit our Facebook page.



GO RED FOR RED NOSE DAY – FRIDAY 20TH MARCH

We are excited to be supporting Red Nose Day on **Friday 20th March** to help raise money for Comic Relief. **Pupils are invited to come to school wearing something red (non-uniform) for the day.**

Throughout the day, children will be able to take part in a range of fun games and activities and we will also be holding a bake sale. If you would like to contribute, cake donations would be very welcome.

A donation page will be available via ParentPay, and we kindly ask for a voluntary donation of **£2**, which will cover participation in the activities, wearing red for the day and the bake sale.

Please do not send any cash into school.

All donations should be made through ParentPay, as the money goes directly to Red Nose Day
<https://www.comicrelief.com/rednoseday>



PARENTS' EVENING

Our Spring Parents' Evening booking is now open. This year we have an integration feature to book via our eSchools app. You can find it by opening the app, clicking on the house icon along the bottom navigation bar, then clicking the Parents' Evening tab. There it will allow you to book for your child and if you have siblings in two separate classes, it should offer two options.

Parents Evening:

Tuesday 24th March 3:30pm – 6:00pm.

SEND Parents Evening:

Tuesday 31st March 3:30pm – 6.00pm.

Please book accordingly to your child's class. Pre-school children do not require a Parents Evening appointment.

If you have any issues, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES

A huge thank you to all the parents who have completed the questionnaire we sent out earlier. Your feedback is invaluable and will greatly assist us in our ongoing efforts to improve.

Remember, the questionnaire is anonymous, providing a safe space for you to share your thoughts on how your child is progressing at our school. If there's anything you're not happy with or if you've got concerns that you feel haven't been resolved, please feel free to make an appointment to come and chat with me directly.

Just a quick reminder: we'll be collating responses on **Friday 13th March**, when the questionnaire will close.

Thanks again for your support!



EASTER SERVICE – WEDNESDAY 1ST APRIL @ 1:15pm

Our Easter Service will be held in St Mary's Church on **Wednesday 1st April at 1:15pm.** All are welcome!

DECORATED EGG COMPETITION

Wednesday 1st April

Pupils are invited to take part in a decorated egg competition. There will be prizes for each class and we will also have an adult section - if parents/carers are feeling creative! All entries are to be in school on the morning of **Wednesday 1st April.**

We can't wait to see your creations!



SPORTING EVENTS

Monday 23rd March (12:30pm – 2:30pm)	Y5/Y6 Multi-skills Festival @ Staindrop Academy
Wednesday 25th March (9.30am-11.30am)	Y1/Y2 Football Competition @ Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre
Monday 30th March (9:30am – 11:30am)	Y3/Y4 Orienteering Festival

Just a gentle reminder that all children need to have the **correct school PE kit** – a white t-shirt, navy shorts or navy jogging bottoms, a hoody, trainers and a water bottle, please. If your child wears earrings and they are unable to take them out, then you will also need to provide plasters – thank you.



ATTENDANCE

Our Minimum Target is **96%** Well done to all classes who have achieved attendance above our minimum target. Super work! 😊
Tees Class you're nearly there, keep it up!

Swale	Wear	Tees
97.7%	97.3%	94%

Current Whole School Attendance is 96%
Amazing Work - Well done everyone!



Reporting Your Child's Absence

If your child is absent due to illness, please telephone the school office **before 9:00am on the first day** to let us know the reason and how long they may be off.

If we have not heard from you, the office will contact you on the first day of absence. The school follows up all absences to ensure children are safe and to record attendance correctly.

If your child is absent for **more than three consecutive days**, or for **more than 7 days (14 sessions) in one term**, we may ask parents to provide a signed letter explaining the absence.

We do not usually ask for medical evidence when a child is ill. However, if absences are frequent or there are concerns (for example, possible holidays during term time), we may contact you for further information or request supporting evidence.

If no reason for an absence is provided, it may be recorded as **unauthorised** and could be referred to the Local Authority.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

The law states that Headteachers are not able to approve leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

If you need to request time off for your child during term time, you must complete a **Leave of Absence Request Form**. This form is available from the school office or on our school website. Forms should be submitted at least two weeks before the planned leave.

[Gainford C of E Primary School Holidays](#)

Please be aware that unauthorised absences may result in a penalty notice from the Local Authority.

If a child has **5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence within a 10-week rolling period**, the school must refer the case for enforcement.

Within a three-year period:

**The first penalty notice is £160 per parent, per child.
This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
The second penalty notice is £160 to be paid within 28 days.**

A third penalty notice cannot be issued, meaning the case may be referred for legal action. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £2,500, a parenting or community order, or prosecution.

Please remember that fines are issued per **parent, per child, not per family**.



HEADTEACHER GOLD AWARDS FOR

Week 15 – Great Effort in PE

Finn, Bonnie & Isobel

Week 16– Excellent work in Science

Esme & Joey

Week 17 – Great work in Computing

Thea

Keep Up the Good Work!



PARKING

This is just a friendly reminder to please take care when dropping off and collecting pupils at school. We would greatly appreciate your cooperation in ensuring that residents' drives and gateways are not blocked under any circumstances. While we understand that the roads around our school are public highways, we would really appreciate it if you were mindful when parking and show respect for our residents.

Also, we encourage you to turn off engines when stationary, as vehicle exhaust emissions contribute to air pollution, affecting our children and community. If you need a place to park, the area around the village green is a great option.

Thank you for your understanding and support!



FRIENDS OF GAINFORD SCHOOL (FOGS)

The Friends of Gainford School (FOGS) do an incredible job raising money that benefits all our children. Their hard work has funded things like Accelerated Reader, school trips and even our stage for performances. This year alone, they've spent nearly £1,000 on transport, allowing every pupil to enjoy exciting trips. Without FOGS, we'd either have to ask for higher contributions from parents or worse, cancel or reduce trips and many of the extras that make Gainford so special might not happen. The same small group of parents has run FOGS for many years and this is their final year.

**TO KEEP FOGS RUNNING, WE URGENTLY NEED
NEW PARENTS AND CARERS TO STEP IN.
EVEN A LITTLE OF YOUR TIME CAN MAKE A HUGE
DIFFERENCE!**

If you'd like to get involved or just find out more, please contact the school office.

BECOME A VOLUNTEER - MAKE A DIFFERENCE



RECEPTION / KEY STAGE 1 TRIP – AUCKLAND CASTLE

On **Friday 27th March**, our Reception and KS1 children will be visiting Auckland Castle to support their learning in history and science. A school packed lunch will be provided for all Reception and KS1 children, so there is no need to send one from home. Children may bring a small snack such as fruit or a packet of crisps. Please ensure children wear **school uniform, sensible shoes and a warm coat.**

A voluntary contribution of **£7.70** can be made via ParentPay. We are very grateful to **Friends of Gainford School (FOGS)** for kindly covering the cost of transport and helping to make the trip more affordable for families. Thank you, FOGS!



Easter Sport In A Day Holiday Club



Thursday 16th April
St Mary's Church, Gainford
(Supported by Scripture union)



Sporting challenges, ball games, stories, songs
and much more!

10.00am-3.00pm

£1 per child

Packed lunch & snacks provided

Open to children aged 7-13yrs (yrs 3-8)

Completed consent form needed to take part

**Only 20 spaces – Book now to avoid
disappointment**



Application forms from:

Sarah Fells in School, Youth Saints or email
sheilajones.nbvlt@gmail.com
www.gainfordwinston.church

A Message of Thanks to Rev Eileen

I would like to share with you that Rev Eileen has let us know that, after much thought and prayer, she and Brian have decided that it is time to retire.

Rev Eileen has said how much she has loved living and working in Gainford and how grateful she is for the friendship and support she has received over the years.

On behalf of our whole school community, I would like to thank Rev Eileen for everything she has given over the past ten years. Her kindness, dedication and support for our school have meant a great deal, and she will be greatly missed.

Thank you

SAFEGUARDING

At Gainford C of E Primary School, we are passionate about and committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and we expect all staff and visitors to share this commitment. Any concerns about children are passed through the members of staff who are trained as Designated Child Protection Leads. In our school, these are Mrs Whitaker and Miss Smith. We also have two link Safeguarding Academy Councillors - Mr Deakin and Mrs Hawlor.



Mrs Whitaker



Miss Smith



Mr Deakin



Mrs Hawlor

We have robust policies in place to ensure the well-being of our children. These policies underpin our practice and values shared by every single member of staff in our school. Copies are available from the school office or via our website <https://www.gainfordcofeprimary.co.uk/web/safeguarding/> & https://www.gainfordcofeprimary.co.uk/web/school_policies/

Please note that if you are ever worried or concerned about a child's safety, please do not hesitate to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Leads straight away.

EARLY REMINDER STANDARDISED TESTS

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/primary-assessments-future-dates#academic-year-2025-to-2026>

If you have a child in either Year 1 / Year 2 / Year 4 or Year 6 please click on the following links below for further information:

- [Key Stage 1 SATS Parents Guide](#)
- [Key Stage 2 SATS Parents Guide](#)
- [Assessment Results at the end of key stage 2: information for parents](#)
- [Year 4 Multiplication Check Information for Parents Guide](#)
- [Year 1 Phonics Screening Check Parents Guide](#)

KEY DATES

<u>STANDARDISED TEST</u>	<u>WEEK COMMENCING</u>
<u>Year 6 SATs</u>	Monday 11 th May 2026 – Thursday 14 th May 2026.
<u>Year 2 SATs</u>	It is recommended that the optional key stage 1 tests are administered during May 2026.
<u>Year 4 Multiplication Check</u>	Schools must administer the multiplication tables check within the 2-week period from Monday 1 st June 2026.
<u>Year 1 Phonic Screening Check</u>	Schools must administer the phonics screening check within the 1-week period from Monday 8 th June 2026.

TERM DATES 2025-2026

<u>Holiday</u>	<u>Closing date</u>	<u>Date re-opens</u>
Easter 2026	Thursday 2 nd April 2026	Monday 20 th April 2026
May Day 2026	Friday 1 st May 2026	Tuesday 5 th May 2026
Summer half-term 2026	Thursday 21 st May 2026	Monday 1 st June 2026
Summer 2026	Friday 17 th July 2026	TBC

Teacher Training Days

2025-2026

- Friday 22nd May 2026
- Monday 20th July 2026

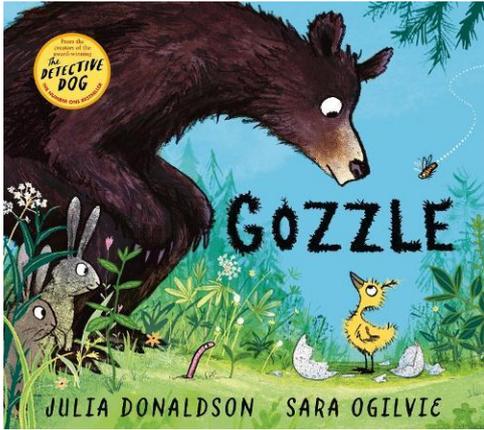
Gainford C of E Primary School Holidays

Many thanks for your continued support.

Mrs Whitaker & The Gainford Team x



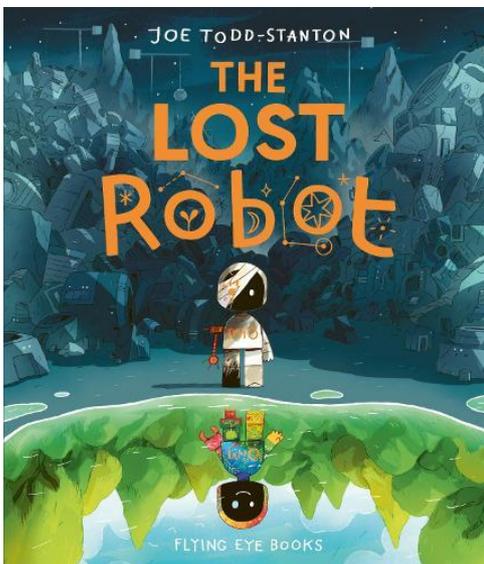
RECOMMENDED READS



GOZZLE – JULIA DONALDSON & SARA OGILVIE

Meet a very cute little gosling! Written by the brilliant Julia Donaldson and stunningly illustrated by the award-winning Sara Ogilvie, *Gozzle* is a funny and heartwarming story about family and growing up.

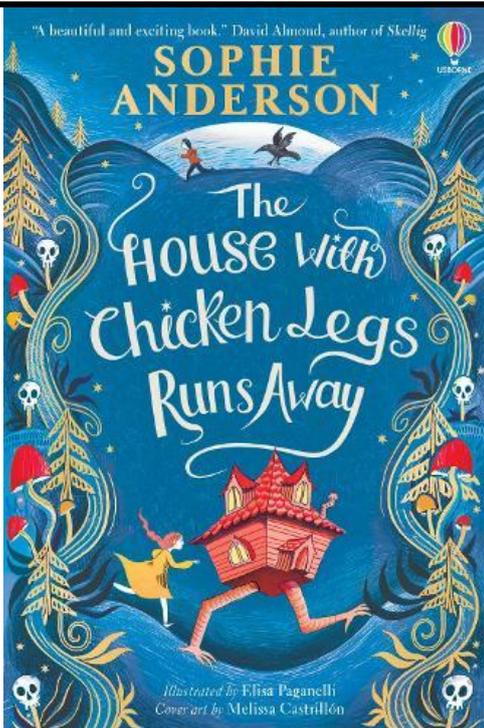
It's springtime. Bear has woken up hungry and finds a lost egg outside his cave. Breakfast? No! Out hatches Gozzle, a very sweet little gosling who is convinced that Bear must be her daddy – and that she should be able to climb, dig and eat honey just like him. Follow Bear on his journey from reluctant carer to parent in this heartwarming and joyous picture book about what home and family truly mean.



THE LOST ROBOT -JOE TODD-STANTON

Deep in the heart of a rubbish dump, a little broken robot woke up... Mio can't remember where they came from or how long it's been, but they know they're not meant to be there. They go in search of their memories and the home they once knew, only to discover that everything has changed.

A stunning picture book with a beautiful message about loving yourself and knowing there is always a place where you belong.



THE HOUSE WITH CHICKEN LEGS RUNS AWAY - SOPHIE ANDERSON

Brimming with fairy-tale magic, friendship and extraordinary adventure, *The House with Chicken Legs Runs Away* is the epic, spellbinding return to the bestselling, award-winning world of *The House with Chicken Legs*.

All Marinka's life, she has lived in her house with chicken legs. Running across the world on magical adventures, Marinka knows how her house is feeling, and it listens to her, too. But something is wrong. And before anyone can stop it, the house has pulled itself apart and run away.

With her friend Benjamin and jackdaw Jack, Marinka races after the house to find answers. Travelling across far-distant lands, through new realms and magical places, Marinka must face up to her fears to save her friends. But her house might not want to stop running...