



Northgate Council Bulletin

Improving Northgate by giving pupils a voice

December 2025

2025

Issue 84

GCHQ Christmas Challenge

The GCHQ Christmas Challenge is a series of puzzles aimed at students aged 11-18.

The mission is to crack all seven puzzles and use the Christmas card front cover to reveal the secret hidden message.

This year's card has three cover designs created by students. Hidden within each of their designs there is also a standalone extra festive puzzle to solve.

It takes a team - the challenge is designed for teamwork because a mix of minds and skills is essential for achieving GCHQ's mission.

At GCHQ they have teams of people with diverse skills, from maths to languages, to analysis and computing.

Join the Maths department in MA6 after school on Wednesday 10th December to see if you have what it takes to solve this years' challenge!



Want to keep up to date with all the goings on at Northgate?

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Follow us on Twitter: @NGateDereham, @NgateCouncil



Follow us on Instagram: NgateDereham



Upcoming events

Make sure you know what is coming up at Northgate. Please note these dates are subject to change.

1st December

Year 11 Textiles, Graphics and 11A Art Mock Exam

2nd December

Year 11 Mock Exams end

3rd - 4th December

French Speaking Mock Exams

3rd - 10th December

Scholastic Book Fair

5th December

Spanish Speaking Mock Exams

10th December

GCHQ Christmas Challenge 2025 - MA6
3.15pm - 4.15pm

11th December

Christmas Jumper Day - TBC
Christmas Lunch

19th December

Break up for Christmas holidays



Northgate News

Missed our last Northgate Bulletin? Follow this link to read about all the exciting activities and news from last month.

[November Bulletin](#)



2025

Issue 84

Northgate Remembers

On Tuesday 11th November, the Northgate community came together to honour the men and women who have served our country and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The whole school paused for a two-minute silence, after Mr Brook's moving performance of *The Last Post*, which resonated across the site.

Our Head Girl, Ella, and Head Boy, Malachi, began the service by reading *For the Fallen*, a powerful tribute to the courage of those who fought for our freedom. They were followed by Deputy Head Girls, Setaita and Akhina, and Deputy Head Boy, Max, who shared the evocative poem *In Flanders Fields*, reminding us of the enduring impact of conflict.

Representatives from each year group, together with our Heads of School and Mr Hambling, CEO of the Trust, placed crosses and silhouettes as part of a collective act of remembrance. This simple but meaningful gesture symbolised our respect for all who have lost their lives in service. Miss Williams, sister of former Northgate student Private Lewis Hendry who was tragically killed in action in 2011, laid a special wreath and read

Kohima Epitaph by John Maxwell. We are grateful to everyone who took part and observed the ceremony. Our sincere thanks also go to Mr MacDonald for organising the event with such care, enabling our school to reflect together in a thoughtful and dignified way.

Malachi, Head Boy, said, 'The ceremony was a truly memorable experience, the laying of the wreaths and the reciting of the poem, *In Flanders Field* and echo around the front of the school. As a whole it made me really proud of the school and the part I play in it.'





2025

Issue 84

Class of 2025 GCSE Presentation Evening

On Thursday 13th November, we welcomed back the Class of 2025 for their GCSE Presentation Evening – a chance to celebrate their achievements and reconnect with students now in Sixth Forms, colleges, or apprenticeships.

The evening, organised by Mrs Bone, opened with speeches from Heads of School Mrs Galley and Dr Hone, who praised the year group's commitment, perseverance and personal growth during their time at Northgate.

Head of Year Mr Stirling presented GCSE certificates and Progress Awards, recognising students who had made exceptional progress through determination and hard work.



Former student Cameron Mason delivered the keynote speech, reflecting on how Northgate supported him through challenges, including dyslexia. Now having earned a BSc in Politics and International Relations and an MA in International Law, he encouraged students to make the most of every milestone, value teamwork, and seek support when needed.

Subject Awards followed, with Heads of Department honouring students who had demonstrated excellence, creativity or dedication in their chosen subjects.

A special moment of the evening was the presentation of Royal Photographic Society certificates, recognising outstanding skill and commitment in GCSE Photography.

Mrs Wright from the Art and Design Department presented these prestigious awards. Mr Stirling then reflected on his time with the year group, expressing pride in their progress, sharing memories, and wishing them well for the future. The Year 11 Leadership Team were also recognised, with Head Teacher's Awards presented by Mr Mason.

Head Boy: Henry Drury, Head Girl: Kyra Travers, Deputy Head Boys: Wyn Evans, Nathan Hoare, Deputy Head Girls: Tallulah Goodwin, Maisie Smith.

Special prizes were then awarded on behalf of Tim Kinnaird, former Chair of Governors, the Governors and Trustees:

Contribution to the Community: Taylor Withers, Governors' Prize for Personal Progress: Miami Standing, Trustees' Award for Resilience: Sam Cox and Kasey Phillips, Tim Kinnaird Award for Integrity: Ethan Rose. It was a wonderful evening celebrating a remarkable group of young people. Congratulations once again to the Class of 2025 - we are incredibly proud of you and look forward to seeing what you achieve next. You can read the full blog [here](#).





2025

Issue 84

Celebrating success

We are pleased to share some news about Jacob B in Year 7, who won the Junior Pike Championship earlier last month. Jacob used bait and lures to catch his winning pike, which weighed in at 4lb 15oz, and Jacob was the only entrant in the junior competition to catch a pike.

Well done Jacob, this is a great achievement!
We found out a bit more about his love for fishing.

When did you take up fishing?

When I was 4 my dad took me fishing and I loved it. It didn't end well because I had to go home as I had a hook pierce my hand.

What do you enjoy most about fishing?

When you catch you feel really proud of how you have used hard tactics to catch such a good fish. We feel proud about the weight of the fish so the heavier the better.

What is the biggest fish you have caught and how much did it weigh?

I think the biggest carp I caught was in France at 16 pounds.

The biggest pike I have caught was 4 pounds, 15 ounces.

Why would you encourage others to take up fishing?

It's quite a peaceful and fun sport. You see a lot of wildlife and it's great in the summer. If you take up the sport, yes you need patience, but it's so worth it.

We love sharing students extra curricular achievements, so please get in touch if you have news to share!



Attendance matters

Congratulations to 7AB, 7EH, 8AH, 8ARO, 9KN, 9DHE, 10MM, 10SP and 11YC who have all won the fortnightly attendance competition so far this half term. We have recently purchased some brand new trophies and these, along with certificates have been proudly on display in tutor rooms.

Don't forget that every two weeks a student has 100% attendance, they gain a virtual raffle ticket for the half termly draw to win an Amazon voucher.





2025

Issue 84

Students inspired at Norfolk Maths Symposium

Some of our Year 10 Maths students headed to The Space for the annual Norfolk Maths Symposium, organised by the Norwich School. A chance to hear from some inspiring speakers and broaden their Maths horizons. The event began with a talk from Dr Nira Chamberlain, Principal Consultant in Data Science and Mathematical Modelling and listed as "one of the UK's top 100 scientists", delivered an eye-opening talk on the ethics of AI and how advances in the use of AI in business and economics can be both a threat and a cure for our global society. Dr Ben Sparks spoke on the origin of number and gave a live demonstration of Mandelbrot's fractal design. He also explained how to find out if you have -1 sheep in your field (if you put another sheep in the field you'll still have no sheep...). Finally, Tom Crawford used an ab exerciser and a ball to demonstrate how to track plastic pollution in our seas (hint: it has a lot to do with Coriolis Force).



Amelia said, 'The first talk was about AI and how we can prevent it from taking over businesses. In the talks there was lots of A-level equations and speaking about Further Maths and why it's important. One of the talks was about ocean pollution and how we can help find and pick up rubbish in certain areas with equations used to do this. Overall it was a very interesting day and showed you can use maths in anything!'. Georgina commented, 'The second speaker was my favourite and most interesting because he spoke about the history of numbers while making it engaging and funny. Overall it was a fun and eye-opening day of Maths.'

Yi Han also went, and said, 'I liked Ben Sparks as I enjoyed his humour and the topic he spoke about. I've learnt what mathematicians actually do after they graduate!'

What On Earth Quiz

Celebrating Non-Fiction November four teams of students took part in the National Online Britannica What on Earth Quiz. Mrs Gill, Head Librarian said, 'The teams were supplied with the magazine editions that are needed, which they read and digested thoroughly before the event. This is an 'open magazine' quiz and so they were also allowed to use the magazines during the online event, making it accessible for all abilities, but the better they are known, the faster the team would be able to answer the questions, making for a very fast paced, energetic heat. Whilst we were not the heat winners, all students taking part were fantastic at their specific topics and worked brilliantly as a team.'



Millie A, Year 7, took part in the quiz and said, 'It was very fun and competitive. I would definitely recommend it!' You can read more about how our students found the quiz in our latest [blog](#).



2025

Issue 84

Social Team fundraising

Last month, Northgate's Social Team led a fantastic fundraising effort in support of Children in Need and the Royal British Legion. The school was full of colour as students and staff took part in a non-uniform day themed around yellow and spots, showing their support for Pudsey in style.

Social Team members did a fantastic job selling Pudsey merchandise including Pudsey ears, pin badges and pens, throughout the week. The bake sale drew crowds throughout break time and lunch time and proved popular as always - with chocolate brownies, Pudsey shortbread and cupcakes, there was something for everyone.

A huge thank you to everyone who donated or baked such delicious treats, your contributions helped make the event a real success.

We would like to extend our thanks to the Social Team, along with Mrs Gill and Mr Banks, for organising and leading the week's activities with such enthusiasm. Thanks to the generosity of our school community, a total of £634.18 was raised for Children in Need, and £439.22 for the Royal British Legion. Once again, thank you to everyone who took part and supported these important causes.



Students take part in Youth Advisory Board consultation

During the last two weeks in PART lesson, students have had the opportunity to take part in the Norfolk Youth Advisory Board survey. The 7 YABs across Norfolk are made up of young people and professionals. They meet regularly to discuss how to solve local issues affecting young people, running projects to tackle these. They wanted our students to tell them about the issues that matter to them. The YAB will use the information to guide their projects over the next two years, from running events, to giving out funding, to help improve the lives for young people in Norfolk.



Question 1: What would benefit you in your education? (please pick your top 3 choices)

- Anti-bullying (e.g. more support and better ways of reporting bullying)
- Support with exam stress (e.g. managing stress and revision techniques)
- Someone to talk to (e.g. someone trained to talk about feelings or mental health)
- Wider variety of after school clubs (e.g. clubs and activities that interest you)
- More inclusive school/college (e.g. LGBTQ+, ethnic minorities, young carers)
- Having a voice in school (e.g. have a strong school council or your voice heard)
- Hands on learning options (e.g. practical options or non-classroom based)
- Careers support for the future (e.g. support getting into college, university or jobs)

Any other thoughts?
Please state:

Question 2: What would benefit your community? (please pick your top 3 choices)

- Transport links (e.g. cheaper public transport and better timetables)
- More free/cheap clubs and activities (e.g. gym, sports, youth clubs/groups)
- Drugs, alcohol and gambling advice (e.g. more info in schools or support)
- Feeling safe in your community (e.g. street lighting, police support)
- More chances to look after your wellbeing (e.g. projects or mental health support)
- Improved parks and outdoor area (e.g. equipment, cleanliness and things to do)
- Hands on learning options (e.g. practical options or non-classroom based)
- Ways to get involved in nature / climate (e.g. conservation work or climate action)

Any other thoughts?
Please state:

Question 3: Anything else you'd like to tell us?

Thank you!
Your voice as a young person really matters and will help create change in your community!
If you'd like to join a YAB, head to www.norfolk.gov.uk/getinvolved to find your local group!

Author Dave Rudden visits Northgate



2025

Issue 84

Northgate was fortunate to host returning Irish author Dave Rudden during his brief visit in Norfolk. Dave, best known for his fantasy adventure trilogy, *Knights of the Borrowed Dark*, is an established screenwriter, games writer and author of many books including writing for *Dr Who*. During his talk to all Year 7, Dave introduced us to his latest novel, *Tales of Darkisle, Conn of the Dead* - a perfect bite sized horror novel, praised for its peril, chills and ADHD representation that was drawn from his own experiences.

7COU and Miss Woodier's creative writing group plus Year 7 Accelerated Reader Ambassadors were invited to focussed writing workshops with Dave during the day, which were fuelled with excitement, laughs and valuable advice and techniques to master the art of great storytelling. We look forward to entering some of their creations in the current 'Stranger Things writing competition' advertised in the library and open to all.



Orchard Committee marks World Kindness Day and National Tree Week

Members of the Orchard Committee teamed up with the Craft Club on 13th November for a special session to celebrate World Kindness Day. Students created laminated bookmarks decorated with pressed flowers from The Orchard. These were then hidden in library books for others to discover — a simple but lovely way to spread a little kindness across the school.

From 22nd to 30th November, the focus shifted to National Tree Week. In another after-school session, students took part in a range of tree-themed activities. They began with a quiz matching leaves to their tree species, before heading out to The Orchard armed with string, clipboards and metre rulers. Their challenge was to measure the circumference of various trees and use growth factors to calculate their approximate ages. The evening rounded off with a lively game of Tree Top Trumps — the perfect finish to a fun and educational session.



Updates from the library



2025

Issue 84

Year 11s have been making exceptional use of the library this term for revising and studying both at lunchtimes and after school, demonstrating supportive peer revision and oracy skills.

We also welcome exclusive Y11 use of the library for quiet revision every Wednesday lunchtime.

Upcoming events: **Scholastic Book Fair - 3rd December- 10th December** - Our Christmas book fair will be open in the library for the opportunity to purchase a range of great titles. There is something for every pocket to assist with the rising cost of living and perfect for Christmas presents as we enter the 2026 National Year of Reading. Parents and students can pay using the QR code either at the fair or remotely, where you are able to scan the code on phones to easily access Scholastic parent pay website, alongside purchasing vouchers if preferred, details sent via school email. Cash will also be accepted.

Book Character Christmas bauble competition is back! Due to the huge success and colourful creations of last years' entries (and the wonderful pumpkin character entries) our Christmas Bauble Competition is now OPEN! Create a book character from a Christmas bauble - any size, any character (as long as it is from a book) for a chance to win the Christmas hamper filled with festive treats, see posters in the library. All baubles will be displayed in the library.

Stranger Things creative writing national competition- details in the library.

After school **Craft Club** continues to be busy and we are now focussing on Christmas crafts- every Thursday after school 3.15pm - 4.15pm in the library.

Christmas **Sing and Sign** - Tuesday 3.30pm - 4.15pm in the Library. Come along and learn to sign a simple festive song with Mrs Warrington-Price and Mrs Gill to share with the local community, open to all year groups.

Mrs Hosier has updated us with the current Accelerated Reader stats. Year 7 have read an incredible 12,788,383 words since September, with 464 quizzes passed. Year 8 have read a huge 8,547,034 words, with 373 quizzes passed.

Students are currently taking part in an inter-form competition – all tutors have a Christmas tree in their form room with stickers (baubles) that they can decorate their trees with once pupils in their form have passed a quiz. They are sent a list each week of those that have quizzed so they can stick the baubles on the tree. At the end of term, the form with the most baubles on the tree will win a treat for everyone in the form. If there is a tie – it will be the best decorated tree!!



Well done to our Accelerated Reader fortnightly winners from last month: Jasmine D, Eleanor A (Year 7), Felix P, Oscar P (Year 8). Also, congratulations to Emily S (Year 8) who was the half term bookmark winner (completed 10 quizzes and got her bookmark stamped for each quiz).





2025

Issue 84

Year 9s take on the GCHQ National Language Competition

The GCHQ National Language Competition (NLC) is a virtual competition designed to inspire language learning among students. It involves teams from around the UK competing against each other to solve language-based challenges and score points. The competition is open to all students, including those who have never studied a foreign language before, and requires no prior language skills. The NLC aims to make language learning fun and accessible, encouraging students to discover their aptitude for learning languages. The competition is a week-long event where teams can log in to the platform during the week to tackle a range of language-related puzzles, from easy to extreme, including European languages and others from around the world, and even made-up languages.



Robyn took part in the challenge and said, 'We were given a set of questions of different difficulties ranging from easy to extreme. The questions had different languages, made up or real and we had to translate them and answer the questions.

I enjoyed working with people that enjoy doing puzzles. The most difficult part I found was probably the extreme questions as they were very difficult and usually required 10 - 35 answers!'

Charlotte also took part and said of the challenge, 'Me and my friends took part in the GCHQ languages challenges. It's a series of challenges where you have to translate many different languages. Each challenge was worth certain amounts of points based on their difficulty. We did it throughout the week during PART lesson, break time, lunch time and during some lessons. You got to choose your teammates and work together with them to complete the challenges.'

Enterprise Team's Christmas goodies for sale

Northgate's Enterprise Team elves have been busy creating this year's range of Christmas items to sell, from eco friendly tree decorations and wooden Christmas trees to wooden plaques, countdown calendars and Christmas money boxes. There really is something for everyone. Students have designed and made the items in their after school sessions.

Please see Miss Douglas or Mr Mottley to order items (deadline is Tuesday 9th December to ensure orders are fulfilled before Christmas). Payment is by cash. Please note, some items are limited availability. Well done to the Enterprise Team for their creativity - we hope they raise lots of money to go towards funding a new 3D printer.





2025

Issue 84

Christmas Jumper Day 2025

We would like to invite the students and staff to support Save the Children Fund's 'Christmas Jumper Day' on Thursday 11th December. In return for a £1 donation, students will be allowed to wear a Christmas-themed jumper as part of their school uniform for that day. Donations will be passed on to tutors during PART lesson.

The staff at Northgate will also be wearing their Christmas jumpers on this day to raise money for Save the Children. We would stress that this is not a 'non-uniform day'. It is a stand-alone day when a Christmas-themed jumper becomes an accepted part of the school uniform. Students who wish to wear a Christmas jumper must do so with their school uniform trousers or skirt and blazer. The Christmas jumper replaces the school jumper.

The aims of this day are to both raise money for an important cause and further encourage a spirit of charitable giving amongst the school community, and we look forward to as many students and staff as possible joining in. Christmas Jumper Day also ties in perfectly with our Christmas dinner - lots of festivities!



Northgate remembers

We were very proud to hear that Freddie G, Year 9, laid a wreath at the Remembrance parade in Dereham on behalf of Dereham Scouts and Jamie T, Year 10, was a flag bearer for the Army cadets at another parade. Well done to all who took part in parades as part of

Remembrance Sunday and showed their respect.



Celebrating success

This is Elsie, one of our fantastic Year 7 students! Elsie has been riding since she was just 2 years old and has recently started competing in local events. She's achieved some incredible results: 3rd place in the Junior Cross-Country League, 2nd place in the Junior Show Jumping League, 3rd place in the Overall Junior League at her club.

Well done, Elsie! These are amazing accomplishments, and we're so proud of you. Thank you for sharing your news with us - we love celebrating successes outside of school!





2025

Issue 84

Students welcome Northgate's writer in residence

We were delighted to welcome our Writer in Residence, Ashley Hickson-Lovence for his first workshop sessions with students last month. Selected Year 11 students worked with Ashley during interactive and engaging hour-long sessions, building confidence in their writing and all produced amazing pieces of work. Students came away with added skills, resilience and self confidence to use in their GCSE English exams. One of our talented writers said, 'Ashley was respectful and really understood us all. I found the first task difficult but soon got the hang of it. Ashley showed us a poem and then each of us got a different picture. We had to write our poem in a similar style based on what we could see. I was proud of my piece!'

Here is the poem below, which our Year 11, along with others who took part in the workshop were proud enough to read to others in the year group:

I saw a boy.

I see a man, broken but rebuilding
I see his desire
I see a man determined
I see his failure
I see his victories, his work
I see a boy
I see a boy running
I see a man broken, but rebuilding
I see a man, working, grafting
I see him achieve his best
I saw a boy
I now see a man.

Ashley also gave a powerful, captivating presentation talk to all our Year 9 students who asked thoughtful questions. The Library has received an influx of requests for his verse novel 'Wild East' following his visit and we look forward to many more future visits where he will work and inspire students across all year groups.



Merit Update

Students continue to earn thousands of merits and have now earned over 25,000 merits since September. Already over 6000 virtual certificates have been sent home celebrating merit milestones, with more on their way very soon. Merit cashing in continues to take place on Mondays, in the main hall from 12.30pm - 12.50pm. Take a look at what you can exchange your merits for in our [catalogue](#). Notebooks, keyrings, stickers and pizzas appear to be the most popular items so far. The House merit competition is incredibly close at the moment so every merit counts. Well done to Attenborough who have maintained their lead since the start of the term.

<u>Attenborough</u>	<u>Rowling</u>	<u>Holmes</u>	<u>Hawking</u>
29.28	28.89	28.26	28.02