

January 16th 2026

Headteacher's News

This week in assembly we introduced our new Learning Power character, **Independent Enquirer Elephant**, who will help the children understand what it means to be an independent learner. We talked about the importance of independence and how it helps children to think for themselves, solve problems, and have confidence in their own abilities. The children were encouraged to reflect on times when they already show independence in school and at home. Over the next few weeks in assemblies, we will explore some of the barriers that can sometimes stop us from being independent. We will also discuss practical strategies the children can use to overcome these challenges. All of this work will culminate in **Independent Enquirer Day on Friday 13th February**. On this day, teachers will explicitly teach key independence skills and provide opportunities for children to apply them in meaningful ways. To make the day even more inspiring, we are looking for parents, friends, or family members to come into school. We would love visitors who have achieved something special by using their independence skills and determination. If you know someone who would be willing to share their inspiring experience, please contact the school office.

Thanks for your continued support. Have a wonderful weekend.

Enriching the curriculum



2026: The Year of Reading

Everyone knows reading expands worlds, sharpens minds, and fuels creativity. Yet fewer of us are making time for it. The National Year of Reading 2026 aims to address the decline in reading among children, young people and adults. It seeks to reconnect reading with the things that inspire us – from playlists and football matches to films, food and family time. It's about reading that fits how we live, not the other way around. Explore how you can join the movement at home or in your community: <https://goallin.org.uk/get-involved/families/>

Not all children are naturally drawn to reading, but parents can encourage it in simple ways: read aloud regularly, make stories fun, share reading time, and create a calm, cozy reading space. Audiobooks, e-books, and reading apps—like [BorrowBox](#) and [Libby](#), where children's magazines can be downloaded for free—make reading more engaging. Using subtitles can support children's reading. Talking about books, sharing opinions, and watching adaptations can also help children connect with stories and develop a love of reading.

Helpful resources for parents::

[BBC Bitesize: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zbxby9q>](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zbxby9q)

[BookTrust: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/resources/find-resources/reading-tips/>](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/resources/find-resources/reading-tips/)

The Bishop's Stortford Library's Page One Book and Activity Club

For 7–11 year olds takes place on Wednesdays, 4.15–5.15pm. Join them for activities and crafts inspired by favourite books and authors.

Volunteer Readers: reading with people of all ages.

We have a wonderful group of volunteers who read with children at Northgate. If you, know anyone that would like to help, please email: admin@northgate.herts.sch.uk

**EVERY CHILD
EVERY CHANCE • EVERY DAY**

Important Dates

Tues 20th Jan	9am Y3 Visit to St Michael's Church
Wed 21st Jan	Y1 local walk
Fri 23rd Jan	Young Voices Choir—O2
Mon 26th Jan	Y6 Victorian Day
Tue 27th Jan	Y2 Old Northgate School walk
9th–13th Feb	Festival of Literature
Wb 9th Feb	House Netball tournament
Tues 10th Feb	Internet Safety Day
Fri 13th Feb	Independent Enquirer Elephant Day
16th–20th Feb	Half Term
Tue 24th Feb	9am Y5/6 Science Show at BSC
3th & 5th Mar	Parent Consultations
Thurs 5th Mar	World Book Day (dressing as an adjective)
Week beg 10th Mar	Playing maths games and work sharing
	Mon UKS2—9am, Tues EYFS —9am
Thurs 12th Mar	Wed LSK2 —9am, Thurs KS1 —9am
Fri 20th Mar	Y6 Instrumental Concert
Wk beg 23rd Mar	Y 3/4 production 9:05 and 2:15
Wk beg 23rd Mar	Science week (Fab Science/House quiz)
Tues 24th Mar	House Cross Country
Wed 25th Mar	Y4 Local river walk
Fri 27th Mar	Rocksteady Concert pm
30th Mar–10th April	2pm Break up for Easter
Thurs 22nd May	Easter Holidays
25th–29th May	End of term
Mon 1st June	Half term
Thurs 25th June	Inset day
Thurs 9th July	Y2 Trip to Hertfordshire Zoo
Tues 21st July	Move up day
Wes 22nd July	2pm Break up for summer holidays
	Occasional day

*Red = New Item / Change to Item

Nursery Applications

The Northgate Nursery Application Form for September 2026 is now open and is for children born between **1st September 2022 and 31st August 2023**, who would like to attend Northgate Nursery for term time only.

Please click the following to apply or visit our website for more information <https://www.northgate.herts.sch.uk/web/admissions/342699>

Please ensure the online application form is completed by the closing date 5pm on Friday 6th March 2026.

If you require further information or advice regarding admissions at Northgate Primary School, please contact the school on **01279 652376** or email admissions@northgate.herts.sch.uk, using 'ENTRY Northgate 2026' as the subject line.

Safeguarding:

Smartwatch Guidelines at School

To help us maintain a safe and focused learning environment and school community we ask parents and carers to note our guidance on watches worn in school. Children may wear **simple digital watches**, including step-counting devices such as Fitbits. However, for safeguarding reasons, **smartwatches are not permitted** if they:

- Connect to the internet or a mobile phone
- Have camera, recording, or messaging functions

If a smartwatch is brought into school and does not meet these guidelines, we will ask that it is removed.

Enriching the Curriculum

This term, Reception have been diving into their exciting new topic, **“Children of the World.”** which focuses on exploring diverse cultures through stories, music, food, and crafts etc. On Tuesday, they made Moana Islands using edible materials such as jelly and Rice Krispies for sand. This was linked to their core text. They talked about different environments that we live in and compared Moana's island to where they live, looking at similarities and differences between the two. It also led to a scientific discussion about how the jelly changed from a powder as it dissolved in hot water and then made a jelly!



Year 3 have started their exciting new topic, **Tremors**, which focuses on earthquakes and volcanoes. They are exploring the Earth's structure, including layers and tectonic plates, the causes of eruptions and quakes, famous events such as Pompeii, and their impact. This week, the children discovered fascinating facts about volcanoes and, in preparation for creating their own volcano sculptures in a few weeks, produced some fantastic, detailed drawings of volcanoes and craters.

What amazing creativity!



Reminders and Updates

Check and Update Contact Information on Arbor

Parents, please log into your child's Arbor account to ensure all personal and contact information is accurate and up-to-date. If there is only one parent contact listed, kindly add a second and third contact where applicable. Having accurate contact details is crucial for managing any emergency situations effectively.

Parents can update their child's account at anytime. Any changes made will be verified by the school office.

Urgent: Outstanding Dinner Money Debts

Please check your child's dinner money account on School Grid as there are several outstanding debts at present that require immediate payment. It is essential to monitor the account regularly to ensure it remains in credit. Your child may qualify for free school meals. To check eligibility, please visit www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims

Arbor Account Balances

Please ensure there are no outstanding balances on your child's Arbor account for trips, clubs, or other activities. Thank you for your prompt attention to these matters.

Celebration of Achievements

This week's stars of the week were:

Ducklings: Ayaz and Freddie

Puffins: Alan

Owls: Ivy

'Learner of the Week' certificates were focused on learning powers. Our Star Learners were praised by their class teachers for:

Well done to:

Robins: Archie

Wrens: Cassia

Starlings: Sophia

Sparrows: Ethan

Skylarks: Cinar

Swifts: Olivia

Nightingales: Nellie

Kingfishers: Mia

Kestrels: Thomas

Kites: Eliza

Harriers: Fraser

Hawks: Sophia



Young Voices Choir Year 5 & 6

The Young Voices concert takes place next Friday at the O2. Please can parents of children attending refer to the information email sent to them on **Tuesday 13th January**. Well done to the choir for their hard work and we wish them and their families a wonderful time!

Kings and Queens Chess Club

A new chess club started this week! Lots of children attended and learnt skills, made new friends, and enjoyed the challenge of chess. Playing chess helps develop problem-solving, concentration, and strategic thinking, all while having fun. We can't wait to see them continue to grow and enjoy the club each week!



Northgate School Association

Happy New Year to everyone!

Pre-Loved Uniform Shop

If Christmas jumpers were a bit of a tight squeeze this year, please consider donating them to the Pre-Loved Uniform Shop.

We also gratefully accept good-condition school uniform, football shirts and fancy dress costumes.

Donations help support families, raise vital funds for the school, and are a great way to reuse items and be kinder to the environment.

Summer Fayre

We have already started planning the Summer Fayre (yes, already!). We would love to hear from you if you would like to sponsor a raffle prize.

Do you own, run or work for a local business that would be happy to donate a prize? Please contact Katie Homer via Advertising@northgatepta.com.

Hope you all have a relaxing weekend. The PTA Team