Pupils and students from Northgate celebrated outstanding results at GCSE and A Level over the summer holidays. This success covered all areas of the curriculum and reflects the hard work by the young people coupled with initiatives that have been designed to raise achievement for all abilities. These results provided a fitting farewell to outgoing headteacher, Neil Watts.

At GCSE, over 80% of pupils gained 5 A* to C grades which is 8% higher than the school’s previous record. The core subjects of English, Maths and Science continued to be very strong and all showed significant improvements as the statistic for 5 A*-C grades including Maths and English rose by 13% on 2008’s figure to 69%. There were a multitude of successes in other individual subjects and seven GCSE subjects achieved over 90% A*-C grades.

The A Level students achieved a new high average of 895 points, which is the equivalent of each student gaining over three A grades at A Level. A new benchmark was also set as 83% of all grades achieved were between A and C. Another record was set as over 59% of the grades awarded to students were at A or B, reflecting the effort and preparation that both students and staff have made during the two year courses. Over 98% of grades received was at A-E.

Mr Hutton, Acting Headteacher of Northgate, was very happy and comments further on the results on page 3.
On 18 June 2009, ten Year 10 pupils got up early and embarked on a trip to UEA. They were extremely fortunate as only seven other schools from the region had the opportunity to take part in this amazing day of laboratory sessions, informative seminars and lectures.

A brisk pace was set as the day started with pupils taking a sample of cells from the inside of their cheek and extracting their DNA from these cells. To do this, they had to learn how to use different micropipettes. These micropipettes measure to the nearest microlitre (one thousandth of a millilitre), far more accurate than they have ever previously experienced. Once they had mastered this, they removed and separated the DNA from the debris of their cheek cells and then prepared their sample to carry out the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR). This is a technique used regularly in genetic fingerprinting and genetic engineering. It is used to make multiple copies of a particular gene using only a very small original sample. Students added enzymes, primers and nucleotides to their DNA and then loaded their samples into the PCR machine and waited for the process to complete.

The afternoon laboratory session then saw pupils loading their DNA samples into agarose gels ready for electrophoresis. An electrical current was applied to the DNA samples to separate them according to size. Pupils watched the DNA as it progressed through the gel and they then looked at the position of their DNA using UV light. The position of their DNA bands was compared to known samples to allow them to identify their personal genotype for the gene concerned.

Throughout the day students attended seminars on medical ethics and listened to lectures discussing cancer and genetic diseases. They had the chance to think through the complex issues facing doctors when advising patients whose families have a history of genetic diseases.

As well as the practical-based laboratory sessions, students looked at chromosomes from human cells and constructed a karyotype. They paired up chromosomes from human cells to identify the 23 pairs of chromosomes that exist in a human cell. They could work out if the individual was male or female and saw the similarities between chromosome pairs. An amazing learning experience!
I must of course begin by once again congratulating all the pupils and students who achieved such fantastic results this summer. It is a lesson to all who remain at Northgate that working hard and having a positive attitude brings success.

Having been Deputy Head here for 12 years, and a parent of two former Northgate sixth form students, I fully realize how important the ethos of the school is to the happiness of our young people and their capacity to achieve – not just academically but across a multitude of fields.

With the support of an outstanding body of staff I intend to use the next two terms not only to uphold important values, such as good discipline and behaviour and a strong community spirit, but also to introduce a number of new developments that will help the school maintain its forward momentum.

This summer’s excellent examination results were achieved following the introduction of a number of initiatives. Some have been building in impact over several years and some that literally gave pupils a final boost in the weeks and, in the case of warm-up sessions, the minutes leading up to examinations.

I believe the involvement of parents is key to the achievement of their children, which is why I was so delighted that the Revision Advice Evening we piloted for last year’s Year 11 and their parents was so well attended and so positively received. As well as repeating this event this year we also have plans to enhance communication with parents. Doubling the number of publications of the Northgate Review to six a year, and having a Headteacher’s page in each edition, is one small element of this. There are also plans to develop a more effective way of consulting a representative sample of parents on major issues, so that parental opinion can be readily taken into account during our decision making process.

From my perspective, the most exciting initiatives underway will provide our teachers with more opportunity to share the excellent good practice that already exists at Northgate, with the ultimate objective of making all lessons stimulating and challenging for pupils and students. With Year 7, one tangible development will be the trial of themed days designed to build independent learning skills by encouraging a problem-solving approach, team working, self-evaluation and reflection.

Even at this early stage in the new academic year there are musical successes to report. On Sunday 6 September Miss Salmon, Head of Music, and I had the pleasure of attending the Suffolk Youth Music Gala Concert at Snape Maltings. Several of our talented young musicians were playing in the wind band, strings or full orchestra and the standard throughout the evening was exceptional. In addition, I am pleased to congratulate four Northgate musicians who have passed their Grade 5 theory examinations - Pratik Bikkanavar and Sarah Booth with Distinction and Lara Bryant and Charlotte Aguilar-Millan with Merit. I am sure these will be the first of very many positive achievements by Northgate pupils and students in the coming months.

On the evening of Wednesday 31 March 2010, Year 11 pupils and their parents will be invited to:

- Learn about the online revision support to which Northgate subscribes
- Hear the reflections of Year 12 students regarding their experiences of Year 11 revision and examinations
- Receive advice and support about effective ways to prepare for examinations
- Pose questions to a panel and make contributions that might be helpful to others

Please put this date in your diary. Invitations will be sent home nearer the time.
The bar was raised for Sports Day 2009, with more events being included, the omission of the gruelling open 1500m and an Olympic-style presentation party, complete with podium, running during the events. As usual, the PE Department were up for the challenge and got to work organising what would hopefully be a cracker. A total of 324 medals were bought for the top three finishers in each event and Marlon Hunt, six-times World Kick Boxing Champion, was invited to present the prizes. A new all-time greats record sheet allowed some forgotten records from the 1980’s to be revisited. The new recording format maintains the best-ever five scores for each event and allowed for more pupils than ever to secure their place in Northgate sporting history in a single Sports Day.

The Design and Technology Department were involved by making relay change-over flags, signs and other useful items. A group of musicians played a specially-arranged piece to complement the presentation of medals and trophies, and although some rain made this difficult to coordinate, it was met with rousing applause. The English Department had roving reporters going around recording details of the event, and the Photography Department had pupils taking press-style photographs, meaning the organisation of Sports Day had a whole-school approach.

Year 7 heats were held during the previous week and saw 15 pupils securing a top-five best record. Notable performances were given by Jack Croucher, second in shot with a throw of 9.11m, and Ryan Tye, second in discus with a throw of 21.75m. The Years 8 and 9 heats took place on the morning of Sports Day and produced a total of 33 top-five record finishers in Year 8 and 17 in Year 9. Seven pupils managed to break the top records and became the new all-time best. It then happened… just as the heats had finished, and the final results were being recorded, the heavens opened. Luckily this was a time when there were no events scheduled and it did not therefore spoil the spirit of the day. The rain finally petered out and the finals got off to a flying start in glorious sunshine. Records were smashed throughout the day, and a total of 65 pupils, across the three year groups, made their way onto the all-time greats lists.

The rain then returned and many competitors huddled under the officials’ gazebo and others found shelter where possible. It was disappointing that the Year 7 girls’ high jump had to be postponed until another day as the take-off was too wet and therefore unsafe. At the end of the day, the final trophies were handed out to the winning forms and special awards were made to Jessica Crissell and Joyce Mlambo as the most outstanding performers. They broke the top all-time records in long jump and discus respectively and Jessica demonstrated further versatility by breaking a second all-time record in the 100m with a time of 12.82s. Tom Powell came close to breaking Earl Wright’s 1997 100m record, losing out by four one-hundredths of a second, but did smash Earl’s high jump record with an impressive leap of 1m 84cm.

Seven pupils broke the top records and became the new all-time best
Northgate’s Roving Reporters Cover Sports Day

As part of a collaboration between the PE, English and Photography Departments a selection of Year 9 pupils were given the opportunity to be journalists and photographers for the day. Their report and photographs are published here.

“Despite the continual downpour of rain, the atmosphere during Sports Day was buzzing. Gazing down from the pavilion we could see people gathered under umbrellas and makeshift gazebos. Undaunted by the weather pupils cheered their form mates and their cries of celebration echoed around the spectators’ gallery. Many pupils created banners in their form time to encourage their athletes’ efforts. One form group had even prepared a scarecrow named Steve as their mascot!

Many parents attended the event and Mrs Moore-Smith, ‘proud mother’ of two of this year’s competitors said that her family was having a ‘lovely time’. Many of the Northgate High School staff were on hand to support the day’s events. We interviewed Ms Flight who described the atmosphere as ‘amazing’. Also in attendance was Marlon ‘The Game’ Hunt, six-times World Full Contact Kick Boxing Champion, and this year’s special guest for Sports Day. Marlon was very impressed with the speed and agility of our pupils and said he was enjoying himself very much.

The awards ceremonies were accompanied by the ‘Northgate Trumpeters’, celebrating not only the athletes’ achievement but also that of the musical talent at our school. The awards fanfare was conducted by Mr Davis and added a somewhat mediaeval flavour to the proceedings.

Mr Watts, enjoying his final Sports Day, described the event as a ‘tremendous celebration of everyone’s efforts throughout the year’ and that the weather brought out ‘everyone’s fighting spirit!’ There is no doubt that Sports Day 2009 was a blast! Not even inclement weather could dampen the spirits or disguise all the fun that was had by pupils, parents and staff.”
The selection process began early in 2009 with Year 8 pupils having to put forward why they would benefit from an outdoor adventure week. After much deliberation on the part of the staff the final pupils were selected. It was really happening - 28 pupils, four staff, two bunk houses, and a truck load of outdoor adventure in the Snowdonia National Park.

The pupils arrived all neatly packed and ready to go on Monday morning. While the mountain of food that was to be our supplies over the coming week was being loaded onto the coach the excitement amongst the group was building. In just a few hours we would be dropped off in the middle of the Welsh mountains, miles from home in an alien environment and expected to live and work together.

As the evening was drawing in the group arrived at the Plas-Y-Brenin National Mountain centre. Boys and girls said their goodnights and, while the girls settled into their accommodation, the boys ‘hiked’ the five minutes to their dormitory. The first of the meals was prepared. The boys opted for the simple option of pizza, garlic bread and salad (yes that’s right, even on a school trip we won’t neglect our five-a-day). The girls should have had baked potatoes. However, due to a fault in their oven (some may say this is due to Mrs Warren pulling rank on who would get the newly-refurbished bunkhouse without a fair discussion) it was the equally-satisfying pasta option.

The first meal was well received by the pupils but, laden with sugar from the mountains of sweets that had come across from Suffolk, it was never going to a quiet night. The boys began with a riotous evening of football and other ball games, while the ladies had a quieter evening with a movie and popcorn. As bedtime arrived and lights were turned out there was a hum of excitement about the activities that were to be tackled in the coming days.

Tuesday began with an earlier start than expected. The first door went SLAM at 5.30am; such was the eagerness to get to the activities. Breakfast included our wholegrain slow-release carbohydrates. Lunches were packed and we set off. Split into two groups the leaders outlined our first day of activities. Mrs Warren and Mr Stuart, with their team in tow, had a day of climbing, while Mr Baalham and Miss Crissell were part of the group participating in a multi-activity day. For the climbers it was a day to face adversity. Many of the pupils on the trip had expressed a fear of heights and thought that this would provide the perfect opportunity to conquer their uncertainty. The morning was spent on the indoor wall before the afternoon was spent out on the crag. Indeed there were many who triumphed in their battle against inner demons and everybody took part. It really made the staff proud to see the pupils encouraging each other and having a great time.

Wednesday saw another full day of activities and was divided between canoe, sports and mountain walking. Coming from the flat lands of East Anglia most pupils found the chance to climb a mountain a novel experience. Faces were aglow as the view of the Snowdonia mountain range came into view. Several even considered migrating out west.

Our final day of activities included a low ropes initiative challenge and orienteering, where several of the staff revealed their competitive side. Then it was on to raft building. Mr Stuart needed rescuing from the far bank and it was a race to see which team was up to the challenge. Thankfully the teams did seem keen to rescue him and the race was on. Fortunately both rafts were seaworthy and Mr Stuart was saved and even kept dry! The last evening was spent on the ski slope, with the pupils learning the basics of the alpine sport.

As energy was low our journey home was quiet, though there were lots of smiles as parents collected the weary adventurers.

The staff all agreed that it was an honour to take the group on this trip to North Wales; we felt that all benefitted tremendously from the experience. Here’s to the Wales adventure in 2010.

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**Faces were aglow as Snowdonia came into view**

> Faces were aglow as the view of the Snowdonia mountain range came into view. Several even considered migrating out west.

**PTA Team Trivia Quiz**
Saturday 17 October 2009, 7.00pm

**Open Morning**
Thursday 22 October 2009, 9.15am - 11.00am

**Open Evening**
Thursday 22 October 2009, 6.00pm - 8.30pm

**Year 11 Certificate Evening**
Thursday 12 November 2009, 7.15pm

**Northgate Young/Senior Musician of the Year**
Tuesday 17 November 2009, 7.00pm

**PTA Variety Evening**
Saturday 5 December 2009, 7.30pm

**Carol Service at St Margaret’s**
Wednesday 16 December 2009, 7.30pm
An Outdoor Adventure in Wales
Doing what comes naturally to many members of staff at Northgate High School is offering excellent learning opportunities to the pupils and students in their care and the colleagues that they work with. The Design and Technology Department works very closely with the Institute of Materials Minerals and Mining to try to offer these opportunities.

The Institute is a major UK engineering institution, whose activities encompass the whole materials cycle, from exploration and extraction, through characterisation, processing, forming, finishing and application, to product recycling and land reuse. It exists to promote and develop all aspects of materials science and engineering, geology, mining and associated technologies, mineral and petroleum engineering and extraction metallurgy, and is a leading authority in the worldwide materials and mining community.

Mr Jenner, from Northgate, was awarded the Colin Humphreys’ Education Award in recognition of the contribution he has made. He has enabled pupils and students to experience the design and use of materials in the workplace in partnership with businesses and the Institute. He has introduced new materials, technologies and modern learning to the curriculum and has brought industrially-qualified experts into the school environment as guest speakers and technical consultants for project work.

The Institute of Materials Mineral and Mining received many nominations for this award from all sectors across the education spectrum and Professor Colin Humphreys, a lecturer at Cambridge University and one of the country’s leading lights in LED technology, said that it was one of the most difficult to judge because of the high calibre of entries.

Mr Jenner was invited to a formal dinner in Grantham where he received the accolade from Professor Humphreys. The awards ceremony was attended by key figures in the materials industry including specialists from the UK and as far afield as Singapore and America.

Mr Jenner said, ‘I really enjoy what I do and it gives me a great sense of achievement that my efforts have been recognised and rewarded. Not only was it nice to see and talk to many of the country’s materials specialists it was also a good opportunity to meet industry leaders and speak to them about how we can get more young people into the materials industry.’