



Brentwood School

CHESS



Report 2024

Brentwood School Chess

Chess has never been more popular and has a central role in the social, club and competitive life of Brentwood School. Our players at the Senior and Prep Schools compete in a variety of online and across-the-board competitions, both individually and as members of various teams.

We work hard for and celebrate our success, qualifying and playing at National Championships, however, we are equally keen to encourage all our students to join in with clubs, coaching and competitions, helping them have fun playing and improving their game. Brentwood School also supports the development of junior chess within Essex and the local community through working in partnership with the Essex Junior Chess Association, English Chess Federation and She Plays To Win.

Our programme is put together by our Head of Chess Robin Slade and our Director of Chess, International Master Richard Pert.

Lichess:

We use www.lichess.org for all our online chess (including House Chess). This is a great site for playing and learning. Every student at the Senior or Prep School can have their own student account whether or not they join in with any other chess activities.

Coaching

We hold regular online and in person group coaching sessions which are led by our Director of Chess IM Richard Pert and our Head of Chess Robin Slade.

We also invite guest coaches into Brentwood School. In 2023/2024, this included British Women's Champion WGM Lan Yao who attended our Girls' Chess Afternoon back in the autumn.

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I think out of everything in Sixth Form, chess has been the highlight.

The chess community is welcoming and we feel like a team. It is welcoming of all levels (beginners, intermediate and advanced). I received a lot of advice that has helped me improve as a chess player.

There are many clubs both during and after school that are fun. However, much of the chess system is online, so that allowed me to balance my work-heavy A Levels with sizeable amounts of chess.

Additionally, I have had the pleasure of attending quite a few competitions. Regardless of the various outcomes, I had great fun and received an experience that I can hopefully take to university to further my chess career.

– Jola (U6)



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My favourite experience in chess this year was being able to help the younger players in improving their chess.

I have helped with the Year 7 club on a Tuesday as well as the Year 8+ club on a Thursday. As well as helping them improve their chess by doing this, it has allowed me to improve as I have learned the different styles in which people play.

– Riley (Year 9)



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Chess club is super fun! Every Thursday, I go to the chess club with my friends Molly, Priscilla and Ava. We normally only play one big game and have a lot of fun laughing, telling jokes, singing and just the thrill of playing chess. Now because of chess I am closer than ever with my friends and enjoying chess more than I ever could have anticipated. I love it!

– Ella (Year 7)

Prep and Senior School Overlap

Chess is the most democratic of sports because there are no barriers through age, sex or physical ability. Our U19 chess teams are made up of boys and girls spread between Year 7 and Year 13.

22 Prep School pupils represented the Senior School online in 2023/2024 and each half-term, a dozen Year 6 pupils make the short walk across the campus to take part in the Senior School House Chess (and lunch). In fact, a Prep School pupil sometimes ends up top-scoring for the Senior School or for their adopted House.

Sixth Form students also visit the Prep School to help run their chess clubs.

Chess Taster Morning

On Saturday 17th August, all our new Year 7 students will be invited to a chess morning in Lower Bean (home of the chess clubs and the giant chess set) to play some chess and meet each other ahead of September.



Clubs

We have chess clubs open to all students that run at lunchtime and after school. We also have a separate lunchtime Year 7 chess club and Girls' chess club.

Students play a mix of online and across-the-board chess as well as exploring new chess ideas. Chess clubs are very social places (there is much chatting during play!) and good friends are made here.

J4NCL

The National Junior online league runs fortnightly on a Thursday evening. We have a squad of 32 players with 4 teams across the 4 divisions of the competition (so everyone can play at the right competitive level).

Students either stay at school after the chess club for a meal and play as a group or log in from home.

Online Team Battle Blitzes:

These take place at least once a week during term and allow any student to represent Brentwood School.

Head of Chess, Mr Slade, runs Zoom alongside which makes them both more social and more educational.

Brentwood School organises National Primary and Prep School Battles on behalf of the English Chess Federation and East Anglian Team Battles. There are also National ECF Senior School Battles and She Plays To Win competitions (just for the girls).

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So far this year I have had a great pleasure playing chess at school. The things I found the most joyous are the team battles we have. The team battles are really interesting because it is exciting playing next to your friends, since chess is normally not a team sport so it is a lot of fun having your friends play beside you. House chess this year has also been a massive highlight because of how unique the experience is to play in and compete against people in different houses. Overall chess is my favourite sport. All this would have not been possible if it wasn't for the amazing chess coach (Mr Slade) we have at Brentwood School.

- Aryan (Year 8)



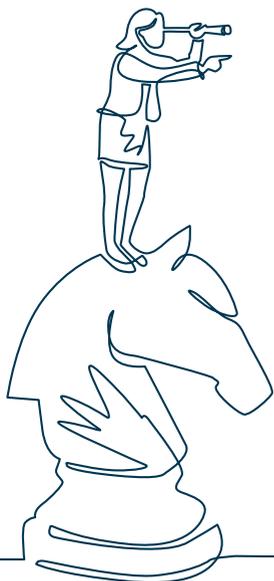
Competitions

English Chess Federation National School Championships:
Our U19 Girls qualified for the National Final of the ECF Girls' School Championships by winning an online Repechage competition.

10 teams from across the country were at St Catherine's School in Surrey for the weekend final in April 2024 where (at our first-ever appearance) our U19 Girls were National Runners-Up to North London Collegiate with a score of 18/27.

We hosted an Essex qualifier for the ECF Junior Team Challenge in November 2023 (for students in Year 7 and 8). Brentwood A reached the National Finals in Birmingham courtesy of winning the final individual game of the final round against KEGS A.

We took 7 students to the National Final in April 2024 and finished 7th out of 18 schools in a tight competition (just one more individual win would have catapulted us to 3rd).



KEGS had their revenge by knocking our U19 A team out of the East Anglian zone of the National U19 Championships at the semi-final stage on a tie-break after a 3-3 draw. Despite that, it was great to see KEGS back in this competition. Our B team had been knocked out in the quarter-finals.

We took two U19 teams to the Eton College Rapidplay in October 2023. This popular event open to all senior schools was making a welcome return post-COVID.



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Hello. I am Maadesh and I play chess. I have been playing chess for around 3 years now and I am getting better day by day. This is all thanks to my chess teacher Mr Slade. He is the chess teacher for Brentwood School, St Cedds and many other schools. Mr Slade runs a chess club every week in which he goes over some chess tactics. After that, we have a tournament online on the free-to-play chess website Lichess.

I have known Mr Slade since I started playing chess and he is the best teacher ever. He takes us on chess trips every once in a while where we play chess against other schools. Overall, I love chess and think that Mr Slade is the best chess teacher ever.

- Maadesh (Year 8)



Individual Tournaments

Brentwood School hosted and organised two individual chess tournaments in 2023/2024.



On Saturday 26th August, we held the 3rd August Bank Holiday Rapid Play. This was an ECF-rated tournament open to adult and junior players split into 2 sections based on ECF rating.



On Sunday 3rd March 2024, we held the 8th Brentwood Junior Tournament. This is the largest junior chess tournament in Essex (organised in partnership with the Essex Junior Chess Association) and attracted a record entry of 140 in 2024, including 40 Brentwood Senior and Prep School students.

Our students also play a whole range of individual tournaments in Essex and further afield. These include one-day or weekend competitions, either for juniors, or players of all ages, as well as longer events like the British Chess Championships.

Our Director of Chess IM Richard Pert or our Head of Chess Robin Slade will often be at the tournaments to support the Brentwood students.

If you would like to hear more about Chess at Brentwood School or Junior Chess in Essex, please get in touch with our Head of Chess, Robin Slade at slader@brentwood.essex.sch.uk

