



Brentwood School

# CHESS



Report 2026

# **Brentwood School Chess 2025/2026**

Chess has never been more popular and plays 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 in qualifying and playing at National Championships.

In 2025/2026, the Senior U19 team, Senior U14 team and the Prep U11 team have all reached the English Chess Federation National Team Finals, to be played in Nottingham on 22nd June 2026.

But we are equally keen to encourage all our students to join in with clubs, coaching and competitions to help them have fun while improving their game.

Brentwood School also supports the development of junior chess within Essex and the local community by running events in partnership with organisations such as the Essex Junior Chess Association, English Chess Federation, and She Plays To Win.

In September 2025, Brentwood School won a British Chess Educational Trust award for its long-running support of Essex junior chess and its success at the national level.

Our programme is put together by our Head of Chess, Robin Slade, and our Director of Chess, International Master Richard Pert. This includes 11+ and 16+ Chess Scholarships.

The first chess event for our new Year 7s will be a special morning of chess just for them on Saturday 15th August.

## **Chess Club**

A range of chess clubs are available at lunchtime and after school, including sessions specifically for girls and Year 7 students.

These clubs offer an opportunity to chat with friends over a game, learn new skills, or participate in online tournaments. We explore various chess variations and time limits in our online club events, many of which are chosen or organised by the students themselves.

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I have participated in many competitions for the School that helped me grow, compete and gain a greater understanding of chess.

These include National School Finals, which bring together the best chess schools and players in the country and the Essex Team Blitz, in which the best players from Essex compete. I was part of the team that won the Essex Team Blitz in 2025.

Brentwood School also hosts an annual tournament which brings many different highly rated chess players to compete. These have been great experiences which helped me to push myself further.

Chess is both an individual and team sport and it has helped me to gain skills that I can use in other areas of my life such as organisation, time management and analytical skills.”

– Markos, Year 11

“

I have made many new friends and taken part in many chess competitions such as House Chess where each of the 10 Houses face off in a tournament to score points. I have also enjoyed all the days before the year started where chess enthusiasts met up and became friends so going into Year 7 felt easier.

One of my highlights this year was when many chess players went to Eton for a chess tournament against other schools. I also enjoyed chess club on Thursdays and Tuesdays. You make new friends and play tournaments or friendly games.”

– Dhruv, Year 7



# Competitions

Brentwood Senior School played in a range of team competitions in 2025/2026.

## **English Chess Federation National School Team Competitions**

Brentwood School hosted Zonal Qualifying events for the three ECF Team Challenges and the ECF U19 English Schools' Championships.

In 2025/2026, we reached all three Team Challenge National Finals – the first time all our teams have achieved this in a single season.

## **ECF U19 English School Championships**

This long-running standard play competition for teams of six is open to all students in Year 13 and below; it remains the blue ribbon event of school chess.

The School hosted a Zonal Qualification tournament during the Michaelmas Term, which resulted in both the Brentwood School A and B teams reaching the knockout stages of the Essex Zone.

Our A team narrowly lost 3.5–2.5 to KEGS A in the Essex Final; however, Brentwood A will still attempt to reach our fourth National Final of 2025/2026 through the Repechage.

## **ECF Team Challenges**

During the Michaelmas Term, we hosted Zonal Qualification tournaments for the Junior Team Challenge (Years 7 and 8) and the British Team Challenge (Years 7 to 13).

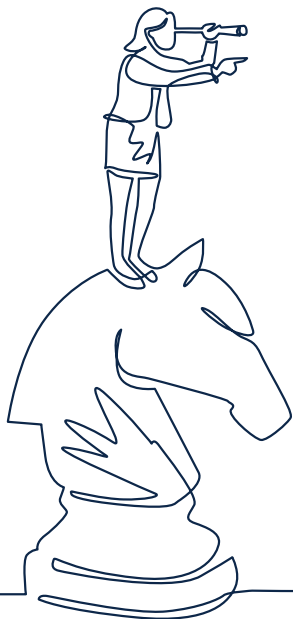
While KEGS won the Junior Team Challenge, Brentwood qualified for the National Final as a high-scoring runner-up.

In a surprise result, Brentwood B won the U19 British Team Challenge, finishing ahead of both KEGS A and Brentwood A.

During the Lent Term, Brentwood Prep School hosted and won the Essex Zone of the Primary Team Challenge, qualifying directly for the National Final.

## **Eton Rapidplay**

Brentwood also entered 2 teams in the Eton College Rapidplay during the Lent Term.





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In my first term at Brentwood School, I have been busy with different chess activities including chess club, House Chess and tournaments.

I have played for the Under 19C team in Wessex and the Under 13 team in Memorial Hall. The J4NCL is an online team tournament on Lichess where I have dinner at school before playing against the same person twice.

I also played in the London Chess Classic at the Emirates football ground where Arsenal play. The Emirates tournament was for adults and juniors. We played 10-minute games and everyone was really good .

The tournament that I enjoyed most was the one in Memorial Hall because I even met one of my old friends from primary school.”

**-Joshua, Year 7**



## **Online National Chess League**

Brentwood School takes part in a wide variety of online team and individual competitions, some of which we organise on behalf of the English Chess Federation.

Throughout the Michaelmas and Lent terms, we compete in the J4NCL (the online junior chess league) with three teams and a squad of 24 players. Students are able to play from home or stay to enjoy a meal at school and compete together as a team.

## **Individual Tournaments**

Brentwood School hosted and organised two major individual chess tournaments in 2025/2026.

In August, we hosted and organised a one-day tournament for adults and juniors, split into sections based on chess ratings.

In March, we hosted the Brentwood Junior Open in partnership with the Essex Junior Chess Association. This is the largest junior chess tournament in Essex, attracting over 140 players in 2026.

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.



## She Plays To Win

Brentwood School organised a special chess afternoon in Michaelmas Term on behalf of She Plays To Win.

The afternoon was a mix of tournament games and coaching and was aimed at girls just starting off on their chess journey.

Some of the more experienced girls at the Senior School helped run the event, coach and play in a special simultaneous match against the participants.

Thank you to Melinda Wilde (portrait photographer and chess mum) for the SPTW photos.



## House Chess

House Chess takes place over 5 rounds, one in each of the House Weeks. Students play on Lichess on their iPads. Most play in Lower Bean, where they can watch the action live on the big screen.

A group of Year 6 students from the Prep School also take part and play for an adopted Senior School House.



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Through the year I developed a passion for chess, embracing every step of my journey as a player in strategy, tactics and learning.

I played for Brentwood School in my first ever tournament for a full day where I showed my best determination with my friends. Alongside that I competed in House Chess competitions, steadily improving my thinking, confidence, focus and patience.

This year of chess in Brentwood was phenomenal and I can't wait for my future years to come. I have been inspired to strive in this sport and hope to continue building my chess competencies.”

**- Satti, Year 7**

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I have taken part in countless chess events and trips, many of which are open to players of all ages and abilities. These trips let you get to know more people, and are a very enjoyable way to become a more experienced player. The events provide a competitive edge to your chess, while still being fairly laid-back and are a fun way to experience tournaments.

Since Year 7, my chess skills have been rapidly improved by the coaching sessions, led by International Master Mr Pert and Head of Chess, Mr Slade.

Some of the tournaments I have participated in as a Brentwood student include the Eton Rapidplay, the J4NCL (an online national competition), the U13 Schools' Championship National Finals and the U19 English Schools' Championships.”

**- George, Year 8**



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This is my final year at Brentwood and chess has exponentially grown in popularity. The number of events both for avid and amateur players has grown significantly. I have immersed myself into a plethora of chess events both as part of the Brentwood School Team and individually which has made my life at Brentwood even more enjoyable.

My first chess memory here dates back to September 2019 when I was in Year 7 and part of the Brentwood A Team that competed at Eton College. Playing as part of a school team created a strong sense of camaraderie between all the players.

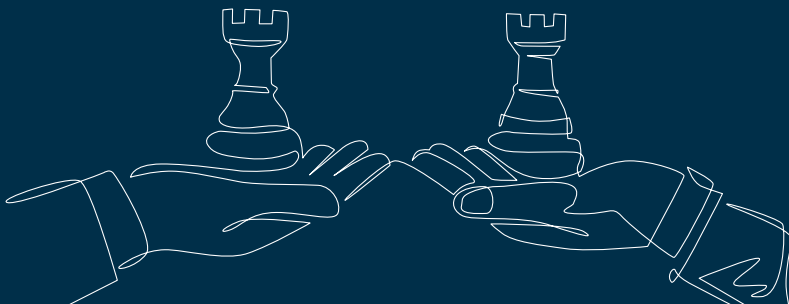
During Lockdown, chess transitioned online, and I continued to learn and improve with the help of computer opponents. Despite the restrictions there were still Brentwood School competitions for me to participate in, including the J4NCL (National Junior League) that we still play in.

There have been many inter-school regional competitions against local schools and as our team has strengthened, we have progressed to the National U19 finals 3 times since I joined in 2019. We have travelled to Nottingham and Stratford-upon-Avon to play in tough tournaments.

As I've developed as a player, I've also taken on a mentoring role, coaching younger students, setting an example, and helping to cultivate the next generation of players.

Beyond the board, I have been involved in many networking events at Brentwood. This includes supporting Chess Open Days for incoming Year 7 students and speaking to the parents of prospective chess scholars. I stressed the importance of having a balanced life here at Brentwood which can be helped by progressing in their specialist areas.”

**–Shay, Year 13**



## **Prep School Links**

Aside from House Chess, every student at the Prep School can represent the Senior School as well as the Prep School online at chess if they would like to. Sometimes they outscore the Senior School students in the competitions.

Sixth Formers help run the Year 2 chess club at the Prep, going across each week to play (kind) chess with the students and give them some help.

Akaash (Year 10) helps out at the Year 3–4 and Year 5–6 after-school chess clubs at the Prep, sharing his chess skills and talking to the older students about the Senior School.

## **Outdoor Chess**

The Trinity (summer) term is when we try to take advantage of the sunshine for some Al Fresco chess.

## **Chess Scholars and Chess Arbiters**

Brentwood School offers chess scholarships in Year 7 and Year 12.

This summer we said goodbye to our very first Year 7 chess scholars, Nina and Shay, as they head off to university at the end of Year 13.

Thank you to both of them for all their help supporting our chess programme in their time at Brentwood.

Thank you as well to our current Year 7 Scholars Joshua and Aiden, for all their help this year alongside our qualified student chess arbiters Riley (Year 12) and Maadesh (Year 10).

Between them, Riley and Maadesh have helped arbitre or organise all the inter-school competitions we have hosted at the Senior or Prep Schools.

Please email Robin Slade, Head of Chess, at [slader@brentwood.essex.sch.uk](mailto:slader@brentwood.essex.sch.uk) if you would like to know more about chess at Brentwood School or junior chess in Essex.

