

Nomination for BCET Awards 2024 – Stepney Park Primary School, London

Stepney Park is a three-form entry primary in Tower Hamlets, with a high proportion of children receiving free school meals.

For several years, children at Stepney Park have received chess lessons as part of their curriculum through the CSC Schools' Programme. Every child in Y4 receives 15 weeks of chess tuition during the school day, delivered by CSC tutor Shohreh Bayat. In addition, the school has a thriving chess club run by Shohreh and one of the Y6 teachers, Chris Noronha. The children, Chris, and the school leadership are extremely enthusiastic about chess and really enjoy the lessons they receive from Shohreh. They have been regular visitors to both ChessFest and the London Chess Classic.

Three years ago, Chris began a series of chess tournaments, held on the first Friday of each month at Stepney Park Primary. Local schools were invited to send in teams of up to 6 players who competed in a Swiss tournament, with medals being awarded for individual performance. Schools were asked to rotate their squads to maximise the number of children taking part over the year. At the end of the season, a trophy was awarded to the school with the highest aggregate score. Chris arranged all of these events and raised money from the Stepney Partnership to pay for the medals and trophy.

In its first year, three schools took part in this Stepney Primary Schools Chess League. Last year, six schools participated. In the current school year, ten schools have been taking part. By the end of this term, seven tournaments will have been held, with up to 60 children competing each time. The season finale, with help from CSC, is being held at the offices of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in Canary Wharf. There the children will take part in a full day of chess activities: lessons from CSC tutors, a simultaneous display given by an FM who works at the bank, and a tournament to decide the season's champions.

Stepney Park Primary School have been a key component of the growth in chess in Tower Hamlets schools over the past few years, and Chris Noronha's support has been invaluable. We believe they are thoroughly deserving of a BCET award.

Matt Piper, CSC Regional Coordinator for London

The best thing I have seen in 30 years of teaching.

Y6 teacher, Stepney Park Primary School, commenting on CSC's School Programme