

Robocomp: Kent robotic games help inspire engineers of the future

Kent kids learn new skills through robotic competition

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- Youngsters from schools across Kent compete in sponsored competition
- Contest designed to promote STEM (Science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in schools
- Event organised by National Grid in partnership with the world's largest robotics programme provider VEX Robotics Inc

Students from five schools in Kent have shown off their new engineering skills at a VEX Robotics competition designed to inspire the engineers of tomorrow.

The tournament – held at Simon Langton Grammar School on Wednesday 29 June – saw students pit their wits against each other to build robots to enter into the VEX 'Nothing but Net' game which sees the robots fire balls into nets set at different heights. Students from other Kent schools Dane Court Grammar School, Castle Community College, Invicta Grammar School and Sandwich Technology School, also competed.

VEX Robotics is a fun new programme which is part of National Grid's UK-wide scheme to encourage budding young engineers to take an interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects.

Over the past year, National Grid has sponsored the local schools to take part in the programme.

Each of the schools received VEX Robotics kits from National Grid at the beginning of the school year, and were tasked with building a robot to enter into the inter-school competition. The robots remain the property of each school, and the students are able to continue building and programming their robots to enter Regional and National VEX Robotics competitions in the upcoming school year.

Councillor Michael Northey, Deputy Cabinet Member for Education at Kent County Council, attended the competition. He got to see the students' robots in action and heard from the students about the challenges they have faced in building their robots and the skills they have learnt from the programme.

Cllr Northey said: "It was great fun to see teams of young people working together on constructing and improving robots. These had a practical purpose and the young people learnt team skills and creative solutions all against the clock. There was the fun of competition and they are all to be congratulated for finding different solutions to the same problem."

"This country depends heavily on engineering and scientific skills, and it is good to see these young people of Kent doing so well in developing and applying these skills. It promises well for the future. We at Kent County Council are very keen to encourage STEM skills and we are encouraged to see such good work. Thanks to National Grid and Simon Langton Boys' Grammar School for providing the opportunities for this excellent event.

Graeme George, Subject Leader for Computer Science at Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys, said: "The students have been truly inspired by this project and this would not have been possible without the help and support of National Grid. The competition was a great chance for our students to show off their hard work while learning new skills".

National Grid Project Engineer Bob Jones, said: "The idea behind the scheme is to try and provide a fun way to spark an interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects.

"It was great to see the students enjoying themselves at the competition and who knows maybe some of them will go onto be the engineers of tomorrow."

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