

St Helena scoops prize in robot competition

'Chipping in' together saw Colchester's St Helena School scoop an award for teamwork at National Grid's robotics competition.

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The youngsters collected the honour after a tough battle of skills which saw them pit their hand-built robot against those of three Suffolk schools.

The competition, held on Tuesday night (24 March) at Westbourne Academy in Ipswich, brought together teams from St Helena School, Sudbury's Thomas Gainsborough School, East Bergholt High School and Westbourne Academy.

The students proudly demonstrated the robots they had designed, programmed and built over the past academic year using VEX robotics kits donated by National Grid as part of the company's commitment to promoting science, technology, engineering and maths in schools.

The youngsters put their creations to the test in a series of fun matches that saw the robots steer through cones, dribble balls, score goals and stack cubes.

National Grid Senior Project Manager Brian Smethurst, who presided over the tournament, said: "This is all about inspiring young people to study 'STEM' subjects - science, technology, engineering and maths. It is really impressive to see what these students are achieving.

"We're going to need 200,000 engineers in this country by 2023 and that is just in the energy and utilities sector alone. If young people get these key 'STEM' qualifications, doors to fantastic careers will open for them."

Science teacher Dani James of St.Helena school said: "This has been phenomenal! There is fantastic team spirit at these competitions and we have loved seeing the overwhelming enthusiasm from our young team."

The St Helena team won VEX Robotics vouchers and free entry to a VEX regional competition, which would see them up against schools from across East Anglia. Thomas Gainsborough were crowned overall winners, while Westbourne Academy picked up the Enthusiasm award and East Bergholt High School collected the Engineering Award.

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