



News Release: 15 June 2026

Former apprentice wins first place in national competition



Photo credit: SPARKS Magazine

A former Uxbridge College student has won first place in a national competition.

Samuel Stevely, from Beaconsfield, showcased his practical expertise and problem-solving skills in the final of the highly anticipated SPARKS Learner of the Year 2026 competition, held to celebrate emerging talent across the UK electrical sector.

After winning his regional heat, Samuel headed to the national final in Birmingham. The seven finalists were tasked with completing a bespoke electrical installation over two days and their work was judged by a panel of respected industry professionals.

Staying strong despite nerves and tough competition, Samuel impressed the judges and was named the winner of the prestigious title.

Samuel said: “I loved taking part in the competition. It gave me confidence, knowing I could go up against people who’d been selected as the best in their region and come out on top.

“You’re competing against all these people but when you have dinner with them after day one, it’s like meeting up with friends. It’s great to sit and talk with people who are passionate about the industry. It’s quite a unique and special experience.”

Samuel was put forward for the SPARKS competition by David Kilmartin, lecturer in Electrical Installation at Uxbridge College.

David said: “Samuel is definitely going to be an inspiration for the next SPARKS competition, and he’s agreed to come in and talk to our apprentices in the next academic year.”

Having previously attended The Beaconsfield School and Great Marlow School, Samuel studied his Level 3 Electrical Installation apprenticeship at Uxbridge College, part of HRUC (Harrow, Uxbridge and Richmond Colleges).

He said: “The college is where I got the basis of my learning; it’s where I got the fundamentals from. In order to be the best, you’ve got to practice your skill. The apprenticeship route really set me up for that. The confidence it gave me is the best thing – going on site, learning things, proving my ability, refining my craft, and getting support and feedback.”

Being named SPARKS Learner of the Year isn’t Samuel’s only success this year – he also recently won first place in the Greater London Skills Competition, held at Waltham Forest College.

He said: “This led to me being invited to an event at City Hall in London, which was a surreal moment. When I started out, the idea was that you’d be on a building site, not in a suit shaking hands with people who make the big decisions about education. That was quite influential in my journey. It was the first big recognition that set me apart from other people.”

The SPARKS competition is well known as a platform for boosting the next generation of professional electricians and many competitors have gone on to achieve even more success. This is true of Samuel who, at the time of writing, is about to begin a new role working at his dream company.

He added: “Everything I’ve done throughout my apprenticeship has put me in the position to have a seat at the same table with people I’ve looked up to since the start of my apprenticeship, so it’s a full circle moment to now be welcomed in as one of them. It’s quite an exciting time.”

Note to editors: Following a merger in 2023, HRUC (Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges) has rapidly evolved into a thriving educational hub with three colleges and a strong apprenticeship provision.

The diverse and aspiring college group now serves nearly 15,000 learners across west and south London, offering a range of courses, including A-Levels vocational programmes, T-Levels, and apprenticeships. The College group also proudly supports over 850 learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), providing tailored programmes and internships to help them thrive.

