

Bumper response to engineering award

When Gareth Higgins and his colleagues at KMF (Precision Sheet Metal) Ltd in Newcastle under Lyme (www.kmf.co.uk) launched their Young Engineer of the Year Award — challenging local school-children to design a clock — they had little idea just how popular it would be. “At one stage, I could barely get into my office due to the number of entries received,” says Mr Higgins. “We had 18 schools take up the project, and we distributed over 1,700 clock mechanisms to be used in the children’s designs. The design brief gave them pretty much free range, and one incentive was that the finalists would have their designs put on sale in a local shop.”

The number of entries created a massive task for the team of judges, who had a difficult job reducing them to a short-list of 100 — and an even more difficult task picking the 14 finalists, who attended the prize-giving ceremony at Stoke City’s Britannia Stadium along with parents, teachers and others.

The winner in the under-14 category was Ben Walker of Ormiston Horizon Academy, who designed a fully functioning 24hr clock; the winner in the under-16 category was Cameron Forrest of Madeley High School. Two additional prizes were awarded for packaging design, which was part of the overall brief of the project.