

Training electricians for the future

Editor *Lisa Peake* and sales manager *Haydon Rainsford* visit **The Electrical Academy** in Maidstone to talk to **Kevin Christian** about what sets their training style apart from others

With more than 35 years experience as an electrical engineer and course tutor, Kevin Christian was the deputy head of the electrical department at Mid Kent College. Within Further education he has worked as an assessor for the C&G 2357 & 5357 and as a Lecturer of electrical installation at all levels.

In the commercial sectors, he has worked with companies such as Seeboard contracting and the Home Office. Kevin is an experienced project manager, designer and engineer, and had successfully run a medium sized electrical contracting company for many years.

Kevin's business partner, Mark, has an impressive track record in both the public and private sector training organisations, holding senior positions at both North Kent and MidKent Colleges and scoring an impressive 100 per cent success rate on the apprenticeship courses. He has trained students in many C&G courses including 2365 (level 2 &3), EAL full time level 2&3, part time Level 3, 2357, 7345, 2382 IEE Wiring Regulations, 2391 Initial Verification and BTEC level 2 Diploma in Engineering.

In the private sector Mark has headed up a number of large scale electrical infrastructure projects for clients such as London Underground, Nomura Bank, The RAF and British Gas.

Practicing skills is the key to training future electricians



Starting an academy

Discussing how the Academy began, Kevin says: "We felt that the standard of education within the electrical sector was dropping. Many students were unable to progress on to the higher levels due to lack of staff and FE resources. We were frustrated with the quality of provision that was on offer and we felt that we could give our clients a better experience and higher quality training.

"We originally wanted to start our business in Maidstone, however we were unable to find suitable premises. We rented offices in Ashford as a temporary measure which enabled us to get the company up and running.

"The offices in the centre of Maidstone became available and these were ideal for our requirements. We now have a dedicated workshop and test & inspection facility.

"We are a quality provider, who believe in smaller numbers within the classes, which makes the learner experience and journey a more positive one. We offer bespoke courses as well as our traditional class-based courses. Some of these courses are held over weekends, which enables electrical contractors the chance to train and get qualifications without encroaching on their daily work routine.

"We have 100 per cent reviews and many of our clients recommend us and return for additional courses. We work closely with local contractors and many give us repeat business.

Long term

"We want to make a positive difference to the electrical industry, teaching industry recognised qualifications. We are constantly seeking new partnerships and embracing new technology. We are currently in negotiations with a leading manufacturer of Electric Vehicle charge points and will be adding this to our portfolio of qualifications that we offer. We are also in negotiations with two smart lighting providers to offer training on their systems. We are also establishing strong bonds with the local community and employers."

A different way of doing things

"We want to change the attitudes towards training as just a qualification, but to actually produce electricians that have a well-rounded knowledge of the whole electrical industry.

"lack of consistency in education and learners are getting disillusioned with the industry. This is leading to no progression from level 2 to level 3 and students dropping out and not becoming fully qualified.

"Employers should be the major influence on training within the sector and have more of a say on how they want their trainees educated."

To find out more about The Electrical Academy and for more information on their range of courses, visit the website below.

www.theelectricalacademy.co.uk