

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Adrian Lambert, The Rural Media Company
01432 344039
adrianl@ruralmedia.co.uk

Date: 11th April 2008

Special Education Project Valued Above Rubies by Herefordshire Head Teacher

The Rural Media Company launches the results of Gaining Ground, a remarkable two-year digital media research project with staff and students in the county's three Pupil Referral Units, next Thursday 17 April at The Aconbury Centre, Hereford.

Pupils and staff at The Aconbury Centre PRU worked with media professionals for five weeks each half term on media modules including filmmaking, journalism, animation, photography and digital storytelling. The project also worked with all 3 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in Herefordshire offering professional development for staff in teaching media skills.

Eleanor Christopher, Headteacher at the Aconbury Centre said, "These small bites of success are above rubies for children who don't often experience successes." She went on to say, "Gaining Ground was such a boon to the centre – a fantastic investment in what we do here – it has helped us to move forward in a way we couldn't have done without the project. The pupils gained self-esteem, but it worked for the staff and the centre as a whole."

Cathy Poole, an external evaluator and former Head of Education at The Watershed, Bristol evaluated The Gaining Ground project over the two years. The programme, which set out to explore the role of media arts within the special education curriculum, evidenced wide-ranging benefits for pupils including improved attendance, self-confidence & esteem and improved media and IT skills.

Adrian Lambert, Director of Youth and Education at The Rural Media Company, co-ordinated the project and commented, "Gaining Ground has provided a model that will contribute to good practice and future policy development for practical media work in PRUs and in the wider education world. We hope the clear benefits of this work will ensure it gets integrated into educational practice for young people excluded from mainstream education."

A trio of international funders, The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, The Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation supported the project from the outset.

The official launch of the project report and its website will take place at **The Aconbury Centre, Hereford on April 17th at 3pm**. Anyone with an interest in arts and media education is invited to attend. Presentation of the report's findings, screenings of pupil's work and practical demonstrations will give the opportunity educators, parents and policy makers to find out more and even to try media

production first hand. Food and drinks will be provided. More information about the project can be found at www.gainingground.org.uk.

For more information, or to confirm attendance at the launch please contact Lou Llewellyn, Launch Coordinator via email on louisallewellyn@yahoo.co.uk or call 01432 344039. For further information on Gaining Ground or to request a copy of the report contact Adrian Lambert, Director of Youth and Education on 01432 344039.

Release ends

Note to Editors

- Based in Herefordshire and established in 1992, **The Rural Media Company** uses media and communications - film, video, photography, journalism, graphic design and the Internet - to produce high-impact moving image and new media work. The Rural Media Company is a key client of the Regional Screen Agency, Screen WM, and regularly wins awards for its innovative, socially aware media work. Please see www.ruralmedia.co.uk
- For photographs or more information about the **Gaining Ground** action research project, please contact Adrian Lambert, Director of Youth and Education, The Rural Media Company on 01432 344039

www.ruralmedia.co.uk