

## ESF Pathways to Vocational Achievement 2005-07

### Rewarding Student Success - Alton Towers!!

At the end of the summer term last year 18 students and staff from Fullhurst Community College embarked on an overnight residential trip to Alton Towers. This was a 'reward' negotiated between students and staff at the beginning of the year when they enrolled on the ESF 'Pathways to Vocational Achievement Project' in an attempt to encourage students to remain motivated and focused during the 'challenges' posed by the project. These 'challenges' included attending a Vocational course at a College or training provider, undertaking an extended period of work experience and maintaining a level of commitment to their school based curriculum.

In return the school would provide a subsidy per student to contribute towards a trip at the end of the academic year which the students would choose and organise themselves - in itself not an easy task for some students.

Initially the students had a day trip to Alton Towers, but this evolved into an overnight residential, with students and staff staying at the Alton Towers hotel. Students spent time on the rides in the theme park, some chose to make use of the water park facilities associated with the hotel, and in the evening the students were taken into the town for dinner.

For many the trip itself was a challenge, both on a personal and social level. The students were responsible for their own time-keeping and conduct during their stay. Some students had previously spent time away from home, some had not, and the contrast was interesting for staff to observe.

The event was a great success, both as a continual motivator for students throughout the year, but during the trip itself. Such was the success of the residential that another one is planned for this summer, for those students who successfully complete the 'Pathways to Vocational Achievement Programme'. Alan Melling (Fullhurst ESF Co-ordinator) feels the carrot of a 'residential' has provided a great motivator in helping students towards successfully completing their programme.