

IMMEDIATE

Thursday 27 May 2004

NASUWT response to publication of exclusion figures

Commenting on the publication of the pupil exclusion figures for 2002-3, **Chris Keates**, Acting General Secretary of NASUWT (the teachers' union with 223,500 members), said:

"The reduction in the level of exclusions is welcome providing it represents a genuine improvement in pupil behaviour.

"Unfortunately I am not confident that this is the case.

"Since the start of this year, NASUWT has put in place 24 ballots to support members in refusing to teach violent and disruptive pupils.

"There is a clear indication that an increasing number of governing bodies, often advised by LEAs, are overturning heads' professional judgments on permanent exclusions.

"Despite being given improved guidance and greater flexibility, Independent Appeals Panels continue to reinstate pupils with a history of serious disruption and violence back into the schools from which they have been excluded.

"There is a growth in frequent and regular verbal abuse of teachers which is often being ignored and its seriousness minimised.

"Teachers still continue to cite pupil indiscipline as a major concern. The reduction in exclusions is, in reality, masking the retention of pupils in schools where their behaviour merits permanent exclusion.

"The right of teachers to teach and pupils to learn in an environment free from disruption and violence is inevitably compromised.

"The consequent effects of this on the standards agenda are self-evident."

ENDS

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