

# Association of Teachers and Lecturers Press Release

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FOR EDUCATION CORRESPONDENTS/ NEWS

## **ATL's response to Ruth Kelly's North of England Conference speech**

Commenting on the education secretary, Ruth Kelly's speech today at the North of England Conference in Manchester, Dr Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) said:

"This a strong speech that sets out a challenging and powerful vision.

"We are delighted that the Secretary of State has recognised the class gap in achievement, which is large by international standards, but she needs to ask herself if enough is being done within the current policy framework to address this issue.

"Early intervention in supporting disadvantaged pupils and their parents is vital, and we commend the Government's increased funding in this area.

"We are pleased that Ruth Kelly has acknowledged that there are constraints to the choice agenda, but she must be aware that a government committed to improving social mobility would look at school provision across a town or city as a whole, so that every child is suitably placed, with the disadvantaged having favourable treatment. The present system favours the wealthy and articulate, and more 'choice' would mean more favours."

"The Government's own 14-19 agenda requires a degree of collaboration that cannot be left to chance, and it's difficult to see how this will be addressed by the Secretary of State's independently-minded schools."

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For further information please contact the ATL press office on 0207 782 1589.

## Notes to Editors:

1. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) is an independent, registered trade union and professional association, representing approximately 160,000 teachers, lecturers and support staff in maintained and independent schools, sixth form, tertiary and further education colleges in the United Kingdom.
2. ATL exists to protect and improve the status of teachers, lecturers and other professionals involved in delivering education to further their legitimate professional interests.
3. ATL is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress (TUC). It is unaffiliated to any political party and seeks to work constructively with all the main political parties.
4. ATL members receive a regular magazine (*Report*) reflecting ATL policy and other issues affecting the education sector. If you would like to receive a copy of this please call 020 7782 1589.
5. Further information and all press releases are available on ATL's website: [www.atl.org.uk](http://www.atl.org.uk).

