

News Release

Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Annual Conference • 21 - 24 March 2005 • Torquay



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For education correspondents / newsdesks

ATL leads support for government change in SEN provision

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) Conference is today expected to give full backing to the Government's special educational needs (SEN) strategy, *Removing barriers to achievement*. The Association will be the first of the six teaching unions off the blocks to pass the jointly agreed resolution in this round of conferences.

The resolution signals support for a move away from inclusion at any cost, which is political dogma. Instead, it aims for pupils to be educated by a community of educational establishments – including mainstream schools and specialised units.

ATL president, Brian Waggett, who will move the motion, has taught for the past 15 years in a 1,400-pupil comprehensive school that includes children with moderate to severe physical disabilities.

He will argue that mainstream education is not appropriate for all pupils. He will use the case study of a 200-pupil village primary school that successfully included children with physical disabilities such as brittle bones and spina bifida, but that could not cope with a child with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD).

“Where a mainstream school cannot cope, a special school alternative should be available so that they can be educated in an appropriate setting,” Mr Waggett explains.

“This is a move away from the position where all children were included on principle. In a minority of cases they did not get the benefits of a rounded education – in severe EBD cases, for example, those pupils felt stigmatised, other pupils were disrupted to an unacceptable degree and teachers found it impossible to do their jobs.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers' Annual Conference is taking place at the Riviera International Conference Centre, in Torquay, from Monday 21 March to Thursday 24 March 2005.
2. The ATL Annual Conference will be broadcast live on the internet at: www.atl.org.uk
3. 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.
4. ATL exists to protect and improve the status of teachers, lecturers and other professionals involved in delivering education to further their legitimate professional interests.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Further information and all press releases are available on ATL's website: www.atl.org.uk