

## **IMMEDIATE**

Thursday 6 January 2005

### **'Choice must not become a superficial 'beauty contest' between schools' says NASUWT**

Responding to media reports issued in anticipation of the Secretary of State, Ruth Kelly's address to the North of England Conference later today **Chris Keates, General Secretary of NASUWT**, the largest union representing teachers throughout the UK, said:

"The Secretary of State is right to focus on the crucially important role parents can play in ensuring their children achieve their full educational potential.

"It is clear that parental choice is also high on the Government's agenda. However, I am sure that the Secretary State recognises that it is important to reach an agreed and coherent definition of what this means in the context of the Government's vision of user-driven personalised service.

"There is clearly merit in a system which provides pupils with broad and flexible curriculum opportunities to meet their individual needs. Such a system would meet the laudable aim of excellence for all.

"However, this ambition could be undermined if choice is reduced to a superficial 'beauty contest' between schools.

"Parents quite rightly expect high quality schools in their neighbourhood. In short, they want a situation where all are schools of 'first choice'.

"NASUWT looks forward to working with the Secretary of State to continue the progress already achieved through social partnership towards meeting this expectation."

**ENDS**

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