

**1 FEBRUARY 2005**

**NASUWT WELCOMES THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S  
RECOGNITION OF THE DAMAGING AND CORROSIVE EFFECTS OF LOW-  
LEVEL DISRUPTION**

Commenting on the Secretary of State's speech to the Newly Qualified Heads in Blackpool, **Chris Keates, General Secretary of NASUWT**, the largest Union representing teachers and headteachers throughout the UK said:

"There is much in the Secretary of State's speech with which NASUWT would wholeheartedly agree. Her message of support for teachers and heads in tackling indiscipline is unequivocal and will be warmly welcomed by schools.

"Teachers will be particularly gratified by her recognition of the damaging and corrosive effects of persistent low level disruption which NASUWT has highlighted consistently.

"Constant challenges to authority, refusal to co-operate, failure to accept reasonable instructions, flouting of school rules and verbal abuse can be as devastating to the health and well-being of teachers as a violent attack.

"I would, however, ask the Secretary of State to think again about her seemingly ringing endorsement of Independent Appeals Panels.

"She is, of course, absolutely right to assert that pupils facing exclusion have a right of appeal. However, the school community has a right to be protected from perverse decisions of appeal panels which have a history of reinstating pupils with a long record of serious disruption and violence.

"The Government recognised this problem sometime ago and issued advice to the panels about reinstatement. Unfortunately, evidence shows that this guidance operates more in the breach than the observance.

"Careful consideration also needs to be given to the role and relationship between groups of schools collaborating to meet the needs of disruptive pupils and the role of the LEA in addressing their needs when all other strategies have failed. High quality off-site provision which can support excluded pupils in either the short or longer term is a vital component of the menu of options schools need to enable them to manage pupil indiscipline effectively and to maintain the high standards of discipline characteristic of the vast majority.

"NASUWT very much welcomes the opportunity to have further dialogue with the Secretary of State on the important issues raised in her speech."