

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**24 February 2004**

**Mathematics in crisis**

Commenting on Professor Adrian Smith's report 'Making mathematics count', Doug McAvoy, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said:

"Professor Smith is right to describe the shortage of mathematics teachers as a crisis.

"The enormous pressures placed on teachers by this Government combined with highly competitive salaries outside teaching are driving our mathematics graduates away from teaching.

"Professor Smith's study is limited to maths but similar studies could be carried out for a long list of shortage subjects including science, information technology, foreign languages, religious education and more. He rightly identifies inadequate pay as part of the problem. To address the wider issue of shortages, the pay of all teachers needs a substantial boost to make it competitive with those occupations outside teaching also recruiting graduates.

"It is the poisonous combinations of excessive workload, deteriorating pupil behaviour, lack of professional freedom and depressed salary levels generally which have created shortage subjects, and not just in mathematics.

"Solve these problems and the crisis in mathematics teacher numbers will be solved also.

"The disaster of the AS level has led to too much of the time available for teaching being taken up by assessment thereby discouraging young people from carrying on with mathematics.

"I believe Professor Smith has underestimated the high quality of teaching of numeracy in primary schools. All the international evidence shows that such teaching is having a highly positive effect."

E N D S

Pr.10.04

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