

IMMEDIATE
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NASUWT COMMENTS ON SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT

Commenting on the reports of the Select Committee's views on secondary education, **Chris Keates, General Secretary of NASUWT**, the largest union representing teachers and headteachers throughout the UK, said:

"The Select Committee Report has confirmed the view of NASUWT that more needs to be done to provide greater fairness, coherence and transparency in the school admissions system. Focusing on improving the admissions arrangements, the Government has the opportunity to make an important contribution to raising educational standards for all pupils.

"The recent independent, international research studies by the OECD have demonstrated that significant educational improvements can be achieved by resisting selection in education. The Select Committee is right to highlight this issue.

"It remains the case that many parents find the admissions process confusing. Parents often mistakenly believe that a place will be available for their child at their first preference school. The myth of parental choice has been exacerbated by the publication of the school performance tables.

"With increased diversity of schools within the system, the time is right for the Government to examine closely the operation of the existing admissions arrangements and to move towards a coherent national framework that applies equally to all schools and pupils.

"It is clear that the Government's policy on City Academies is now under siege. Whilst the intention to invest in a programme of support for pupils in areas where there are high levels of deprivation is laudable, the application of the Academy concept is highly contentious.

"The Select Committee raises some interesting questions about whether Academies offer value for money and divert funds from neighbouring schools. A full evaluation of the existing ones would help to answer these important questions.

"Questions have also been raised about the Academies' contribution to raising standards. The best way a high-level and sustainable contribution can be made to this agenda is through the application of existing national frameworks, particularly the national framework of teachers' pay and conditions of service."